



DECISIVE MOVE

Actor Shehnaaz Gill reveals at a singing reality show that she ran away from home to fulfil her dreams

LEISURE P2



NEW DEFINITIONS

Cambridge Dictionary faces criticism on social media for changing the definitions of the word 'man' and 'woman'

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA REACH 278/6

Cheteshwar Pujara and Shreyas Iyer score half centuries to propel India to 278/6 on Day 1 in the 1st Test against Bangladesh

SPORTS P12



ENJOYING THEIR MOMENT: Kids and volunteers in colourful attires take part in a procession organised by 'Swabhiman' from Exhibition Ground to Utkal Mandap in Bhubaneswar to mark International Children's Day, Wednesday

Govt cracks whip on fake medicines

The fake medicine racket in the state came to light with the arrest of two persons in the last week of September from Bihar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: Following reports of illegal sale of spurious medicines in different parts of Odisha, the state government has decided to crack the whip once again. It has asked concerned officials of various departments to conduct raids to prevent storing and selling of spurious drugs.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary Shalini Pandit has directed all field officers and enforcement squads to stay vigilant about medicines supplied from outside the state and intensify raids on all suspicious points, persons, stockists and shops. The officers have been asked to take stringent action against those found involved in the nefarious activities. Sources said that all medicines

are being scrutinised very carefully. In case of doubts over any variety, the medicine is being promptly seized. Raids will be conducted on a regular basis, a Health department official informed.

Sources also informed that allegedly spurious medicines have been seized from six shops in Cuttack, one in Kendrapara, two in Jharsuguda and one each in Sundargarh, Bargarh and Sambalpur districts. Cases have been initiated against the shops and the concerned stockists, officials informed. At many places locals said that raids should be conducted on a regular basis to prevent the sale of spurious medicines as it is quite rampant.

Sources said that suspicious medicines were seized from shops and stockists including VR Agency, Puja Enterprises, Kyal agency, Mahabir Prasad Radhesyam, Shree Distributor and Sri MH in Cuttack district; Shyam Medical and Amit Agency in Sundargarh; Ashok Medical Hall in Bargarh; Durga Agency in Sambalpur and Sai Traders in Kendrapara.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We booked a flight ticket but thanks to the long queue at the airport, we had to take an air ambulance

No High Court benches in Odisha districts, says SC

The apex court pointed out that demands for courts in district has become obsolete with development of technology making communication easier

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 14: The Supreme Court nixed Wednesday the plea of a permanent bench of the Orissa High Court in Sambalpur. The apex court said that the 'use of technology has made the demands by the agitating lawyers obsolete'.

"The passage of time and use of technology has made the demands obsolete. The use of technology is quite widespread now and monitored by the Orissa High Court. There is no need for an additional bench," said a bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice SK Kaul and Justice AS Oka.

"There is no hope for formation of a bench. Even if there was a remote possibility, it is lost now with the conduct of the agitating lawyers," the Supreme Court bench pointed out.

The apex court bench noted that every district in Odisha has e-court facilities and litigants can file cases in the high court from there. The apex court further ordered



that virtual court facilities will be made functional within three months in each district from where litigants and lawyers can appear before the Orissa High Court.

The top court was informed that there are demands for additional benches in Bolangir, Koraput, Berhampur, Balasore, Sonepur, Rourkela and Sambalpur districts. However, only two districts are eligible for additional benches as per the Jaswant Singh Committee report of 1985 which laid provision for setting up additional benches at the districts beyond 300km from the existing bench of the high court.

The Supreme Court bench also expressed displeasure at the way demands have been raised for a bench in Sambalpur. "The shifting or creation of High Court

benches cannot be done with such whimsical demands. We are putting this in the order to foreclose the issue," the SC bench said.

The apex court also pulled up Odisha DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal and Sambalpur range IG Deepak Kumar for their failure in curbing the protests. The DGP and IG, who appeared before the SC through video conferencing, were asked to see to it that functioning of the courts and the security of the advocates are not affected.

The apex court 'warned' it will come down 'very hard' on those who vandalised courts and disrupted proceedings in some districts of Odisha, including members of the bar. "If the police cannot control the situation, let us know. If required we will send in paramilitary forces," the bench said.

Continued on P4

Poaching scourge haunts SNP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: The special task force (STF) of the Odisha crime branch seized Wednesday a tiger skin and arrested one person in this connection, an official said. Acting on a tip-off, a team of STF conducted a raid with the help of officials of Baripada Forest division near Belpal Chhak under Udala police station in Mayurbhanj district.

The officials seized a Royal Bengal tiger skin and arrested Debashish Patra alias Sibbu of Musakhai village of the same district. In this connection, the STF has registered a case under relevant sections of IPC and Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Officials informed that the tiger has been killed close to a month.



Suspended forest officials arrested

BARIPADA: The Odisha Forest department arrested Wednesday three of its employees over the alleged killing of an elephant in Similipal National Park (SNP). Those arrested have been identified as Shiba Shankar Sarmal, Jenabil Range forester-in-charge, Chandrabhanu Behera, forester of Gurandhi section and Binod Kumar Das, forest guard of Special Tiger Protection Force. Earlier they had been suspended for their alleged involvement in disposing of the carcass of an elephant killed by poachers.

The seizure of the tiger skin has sent alarm bells ringing for the Forest department and triggered outrage among wildlife enthusiasts as the population of the big cat is already on the brink of extinction in the tiger reserve.

As the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) is located very close to the area from where the tiger skin was seized,

questions are being raised on the protection of wildlife animals in the forest area. **Continued on P4**

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	62677.91 ↑ 144.61
NIFTY	18660.30 ↑ 52.30
DOLLAR	82.55 ↑ ₹0.12
EURO	87.90 ↑ ₹0.33
GOLD	₹54,675 ↓ ₹68
SILVER	₹69,091 ↑ ₹316

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 32.2°C	31.0°C
	MIN 20.0°C	19.5°C
Humidity	85%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Shallow to moderate Fog likely	

SHORT TAKES

Man's suicide bid near Lok Seva Bhawan

JAIPUR: A 75-year-old man from Jagatsinghpur tried to end his life by consuming phenyl in front of Lok Seva Bhawan here, Wednesday, alleging police inaction. The septuagenarian, identified as Rabindra Das was rescued and rushed to Capital Hospital. According to Das, he has been eking out a living from a salon in Kalinga Vihar area here for which he had spent nearly Rs 5 lakh. In October first week, two of his employees and landlord began harassing him in order to take possession of the salon illegally, Das informed. Despite complaints, police did not help him, Das alleged. **P3**

Nov WPI inflation hits 21-month low

NEW DELHI: The wholesale price-based inflation fell to a 21-month low of 5.85 per cent in November as prices of food, fuel and manufactured items softened. The WPI (wholesale price index) based inflation has been on a declining trend since May and came down to single digit in October at 8.39 per cent. Experts said a high base of last year and some easing in food prices also worked in favour of the November 2022 wholesale price index coming in at its lowest level since February 2021 when it was 4.83 per cent. **P11**

21 die in Bihar after consuming spurious hooch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patna, Dec 14: At least 21 people died Wednesday and many are battling for their lives after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Bihar's Saran district. Police have officially confirmed 17 deaths while a section of the media has reported that 24 persons have lost their lives.

Though results of the post-mortems are awaited, the family members of the deceased have alleged that they lost their lives after they consumed hooch.

Tragedy struck in Isuapur, Mashrak and Annour villages of the district after a number of people consumed liquor Tuesday night. Local leaders said that many people complained about uneasiness, nausea, breathlessness, stomach pain and blurry vision. Among those that have been admitted to the hospital, many are still in critical condition, they added.

Saran district SP Santosh Kumar said that family members of the 10 deceased persons have alleged that they died due to consumption of hooch. "Many others who have fallen ill are taking treatment secretly, so we cannot ascertain how many are suffering," Kumar informed.

Kumar also said three liquor smugglers have been arrested so far. "We are looking for others who have been identified," he informed.

The incident triggered a slugfest in the Bihar Assembly where the ruling 'Mahagathbandhan' led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and opposition BJP traded charges.

'Messimania' sweeps India, Bangladesh

2 COUNTRIES BOUND TOGETHER BY THEIR LOVE FOR FOOTBALL PRAY FOR ARGENTINA SUPERSTAR'S SUCCESS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 14: A little more than 11 years ago in August 2011, Lionel Messi set foot in Kolkata, the only Indian city he has ever visited. He never visited Kerala or Goa or India's neighbouring state, Bangladesh. If he had done so, he would have had some idea of how the two nations celebrated Tuesday night when Messi's Argentina defeated Croatia to enter the final of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

The final represents the final chance for Messi to get the World Cup winner's medal and place himself in the same echelon with his idol Diego Armando Maradona. After Argentina had lost their opening match to Saudi Arabia, it was Messi who had taken the lead in scripting the turnaround. And what a turnaround it has been!

'Messimania' has grown with each passing day as Argentina have won five successive matches to once more take Messi close to his dream of winning the World Cup at least once.

When Messi, with his moist eyes, stares towards nothingness, he can stop the world around you. When he gets agitated and argues with a referee, you too get angry. That is the magic of the man.

And when you see him running circles around the best in the world and then make them chase shadows like he did Tuesday night with defender Josko Gvardiol, the world seems a better place.

One can win every trophy in the world but the FIFA World Cup is special. Pele touched it thrice; Maradona too got a chance to caress the hands that hold the 'Golden Globe'. Messi knows for sure that now is his last chance to join the

two, or otherwise the chapter would remain unfinished in pages of his football history.

In short, Indian fans want Messi to do a (Sachin) Tendulkar act. After years of wait, Tendulkar finally managed to hold the trophy in his last cricket World Cup. Now Messi has the chance to redeem himself from the 2014 loss when he left the field with teary eyes in Brazil. He has already said this is his last World Cup.

"I have seen God walk on earth. All I want now is to see Messi lifting the World Cup. I wouldn't have any regrets in my life if I don't watch any sport after that day. But man, Messi, should win," said Deepto Roy, a Mumbai based lawyer, from Doha.

Mohammed Abdullah from Bangladesh went a step further. "Bangladeshis never support Brazil... we have always rooted for Argentina.

Yesterday (Tuesday) you should have been to the Dhaka University. There were more than 50,000 people wearing the Argentina jersey watching the game. We are sure this time Messi will do it (win World Cup)," said Abdullah, who works for a newspaper group in Dhaka.

The love for Messi however, hasn't happened overnight. It has happened due to Maradona. His skills have united the Bengalis, Malayalis and the Goans, the three football mad states in India. Now more than Messi, his fans are hoping that he signs off in a flourish.

MESSI MAGIC

GOALS SCORED	SHOTS ON GOAL
5	27
ASSISTS FOR GOALS	SHOTS ON TARGET
3	14
MAN OF THE MATCH	TACKLES BEATEN
4	36

leisure



TONI COLLETTE SEEKS SOLACE IN POEMS AFTER SPLIT WITH HUBBY

Toni Collette has turned to literature and poetry to explain the emotions she is experiencing after her split from her husband of 20 years, David Galafassi. She put up a poem by Kate Baer, titled *Halfway There* on her Instagram account.

ADAM SANDLER TO GET MARK TWAIN PRIZE

Over the years, The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor has gone to luminaries such as Richard Pryor, Carl Reiner and Whoopi Goldberg. But this year, Adam Sandler would receive the prestigious award at a gala March 19, said the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You are likely to give in to the demands of your children today. Ganesh says it is for times like this that you labour so hard. You will finish the tasks that you have been postponing for a long time. It is a good day for people in the medical field and in the public sector.

TAURUS
You may feel frustrated and stranded in family matters today, says Ganesh. Shower your warmth and care to make up for past mistakes. Your spouse will be supportive and lend you a helping hand to regain your mental composure. Reciprocate with intimacy and go with the flow, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will listen to your heart over your head, swept away as you will be in a flood of emotions today. This could mean that you will be unable to distinguish between good and bad. However, looking back upon your day in the evening, you are unlikely to regret any of the decisions you made, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright future. You will resolutely implement plans that you have made thoughtfully. Such methodical decisions will save you a lot of time in the future.

LEO
You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant, but if luck is not on your side, you can forget becoming a business tycoon. Fortunately, that is not the case with you today.

VIRGO
If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesh. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure.

LIBRA
Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesh disapproves of this. Look forward to a delightful evening, for, you will have fun in the company of friends.

SCORPIO
Today, you are like a balloon that may burst any time. You may vent out all the sweet and bitter experiences and feel much lighter. Or it may have adverse effects on your health, says Ganesh. You prefer to stay in your cocoon, in the warmth of your near and dear ones.

SAGITTARIUS
Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesh. Catching a film with your beloved today is a very good idea. Chances are you may have a nice outing along with your friends or family. In either case, the load in your wallet is likely to lessen, steadily if not dramatically.

CAPRICORN
You firmly believe in the concept of 'health is wealth'. You have maintained a very good health so far and it will not be an issue today, also. Successful completion of current projects seem to be a distant target, however, you will finish them off. Your boss may get upset with you for not completing the work on time. You will put monetary issues on the back burner for the day, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You are disappointed and you seek solace in spirituality. Don't run away from the problems; rather face them with strength and confidence, advises Ganesh, to bring your life back on track. With patience and belief in the Almighty, you will be sail through the storm.

PISCES
You will display kindness and generosity today and will do your best to help anyone in need. At work you will receive praise for the efforts that you've put in and your dedication will be validated. Even though you intend to give utmost importance to your family, this intention will trail in the shadow of pending work which will require long hours.



Pooja goes religious on reality show

Mumbai: Actress Pooja Hedge, who is gearing up for the release of her comedy-drama film *Cirkus* opposite Ranveer Singh was recently spotted singing a religious song on a Marathi reality show.

The actor was quizzed by the host on whether she knows to speak in Marathi, and that's when she surprised everyone by singing the religious Marathi song *Dehachi Tijori*.

Marathi actor Swwapnil Joshi, who was also present in the audience, didn't shy away from giving the actor a standing ovation.

Pooja will be ending the year 2022 on a good note with Rohit Shetty's *Cirkus*, after delivering multiple releases. She is playing the love interest to one of the identical twins played by Ranveer Singh in the movie.

The film stars Ranveer in a dual role alongside Pooja, Jacqueline Fernandez and Varun Sharma. It also features Deepika Padukone in a cameo role.

On the other hand, a recent report suggested that Salman has been spending a lot of time with Pooja. The couple has fallen in love and as a result of it, the superstar has also signed the actress in two of his upcoming films.

AGENCIES

Shehnaaz ran away from home to fulfill dreams

Mumbai: Shehnaaz Gill revealed that she ran away from home to fulfill her dreams during the Senior Citizen Special episode of singing reality show *Indian Idol 13*. She also talked about taking her mom, Parminder Kaur Gill for her first international trip to Dubai.

When contestant Debosmita Roy told Shehnaaz about her family and how her parents supported her in her singing career, the former *Bigg Boss 13* contestant said that she is lucky to have supportive parents.

She shared: "There are very few families in our country who support working women. 'Main apne sapnon ko poora karne ke liye ghar se bhaag gayi thi (I ran away from my house to fulfill my dreams). Debosmita, you are very lucky to have such supportive parents. Always stand by them and make them proud."

Shehnaaz, who recently featured in the music video *Ghani Syaani* with the popular rapper MC Square, also said: "I recently took my mother for her first international trip to Dubai and the feeling was surreal. It always feels

great to do something for your parents."

Vishal Dadlani, Neha Kakkar, and Himesh Reshammiya are the judges on *Indian Idol 13*.

IANS



PIC: ADITYA KUMAR NAIK/FB

Two-day national festival on Mayurbhanj Chhau from Dec 16

Bhubaneswar: Though Mayurbhanj Chhau is one of the rare dance forms practiced in the district, of late it has lost its sheen, thanks to administrative apathy.

However the district administration had launched *Project*

Chhauni, a special initiative in 2016, to preserve and develop the form and help out the artistes. In the past six years the project, set up by the then Collector of Mayurbhanj Rajesh Prabhakar patil, has achieved many milestones.

As a next big leap, the National Festival of Mayurbhanj Chhau Naatchi will be held Dec 16 and 17 at 6.30 pm onwards here at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar.

Many renowned artistes like Santosh Nair from Sadhya (New Delhi), Rakesh Sai Babu from Trikaya Foundation (New Delhi), Carolina Prada from Columbia will perform on the occasion. Similarly, the artistes of Mayurbhanj Chhau performing unit of Project Chhauni will also perform at the event. Another Chhau show, choreographed by Vidushi Shama Bhate from Pune and Ileena Citaristi of Bhubaneswar will also be showcased. The event will be a combination of both contemporary and traditional dance forms of Mayurbhanj Chhau, it was learnt.

Officials of Sangeet Natak Akademi (New Delhi) and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi will be in attendance at the event.

PNN

SRK's Pathaan in trouble over saffron costume

Bhopal: Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's upcoming flick *Pathaan* may face problems in Madhya Pradesh as both the ruling and the opposition have objected to the saffron costume worn by the actress in the film.

Responding to the film promos, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra Wednesday termed the costumes and scenes in the film 'obscene and condemnable'. It should be corrected, or the state government will be forced to take a decision on the screening of the film.

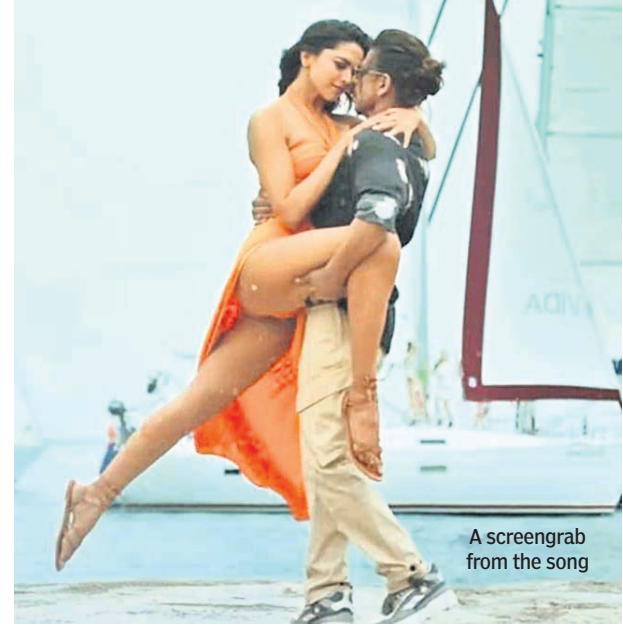
Objection has been raised over Deepika Padukone's saffron costume in a song titled *Besharam Rang*. Released Tuesday, the song is trending on social media.

Reacting to the controversy, state home minister Narottam Mishra said, "Actress Deepika Padukone's costume is highly objectionable and the song has been shot with a dirty mindset. The scenes and costumes of the songs should be changed, or we will have to take a decision on its screening in Madhya Pradesh," Mishra said while accusing the actress of sup-

porting the 'Tukde Tukde' gang. Notably, leader of opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly Govind Singh has also expressed his anger on costumes in the song.

"The scenes of the song and costumes are highly objectionable. Such things are not acceptable in Indian culture," Singh said while talking to the reporters Wednesday.

IANS

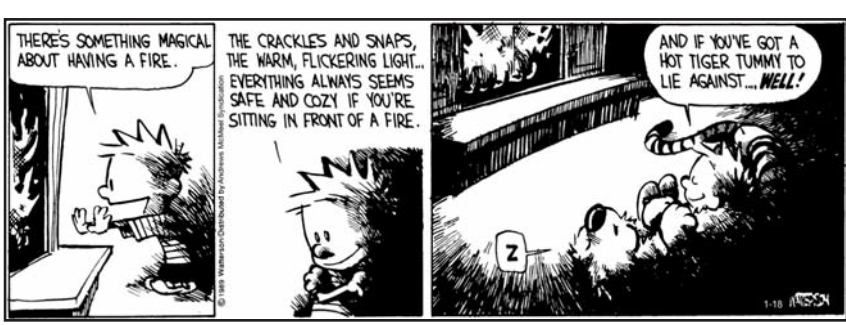


A screengrab from the song

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

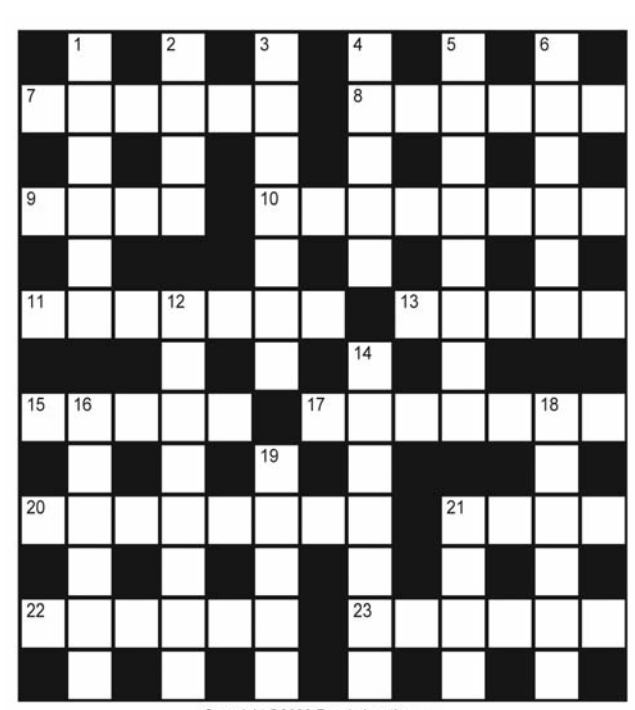


BREVITY



FUN post

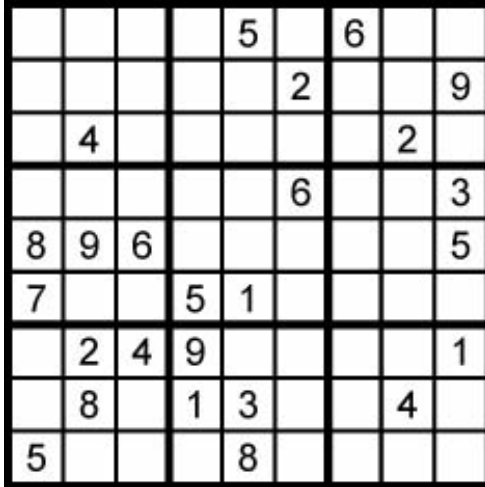
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Courage under fire
 - 8 Second sign of the zodiac
 - 9 Rum-soaked cake
 - 10 Give the cold-shoulder (5-3)
 - 11 Nightclub
 - 13 Bridge support
 - 15 Piquant
 - 17 Type of sale
 - 20 Gulf emirate (3,5)
 - 21 Baby buggy
 - 22 Professional movie reviewer
 - 23 Gofer's job
- Down**
- 1 Melon-like tropical fruit
 - 2 Eastern discipline
 - 3 Conundrum
 - 4 Guinness output
 - 5 Morel, for one
 - 6 Smorgasbord
 - 12 Poison cure
 - 14 Anniversary party?
 - 16 Start out
 - 18 Part of a healthy diet
 - 19 Impertinent
 - 21 Trim

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

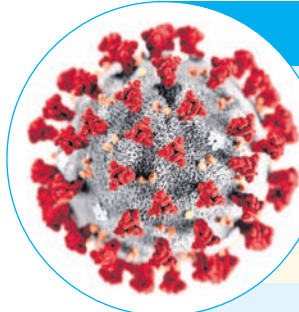


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

IN MEMORIAM

I&PR department director Indramani Tripathy speaks during the state-level birth anniversary celebration of Pandit Nilamani Bidyaratna at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,51,45,228	63,00,04,880	66,62,518
India	4,46,75,247	4,41,40,743	5,30,658
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Elderly man tries to kill self over police inaction

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: After running from pillar to post for over two months, a 75-year-old man from Jagatsinghpur tried to end his life by consuming phenyl in front of Lok Seva Bhawan here, Wednesday, alleging police inaction.

The septuagenarian, identified as Rabintra Das of Raghunathpur area in Jagatsinghpur district, was rescued and rushed by police to the Capital Hospital here.

According to Das, he has been making a living from a salon in Kalinga Vihar area under Tamando police limits for which he had spent nearly ₹5 lakh.

Things were smooth for initial months. However, it was in the first week of October this year when three persons—two of his employees Ajay Barik and Ranjan Barik, and landlord Satyabrata Behera—began harassing him in a bid to take possession of the



Rabintra Das has been making a living from a salon in Kalinga Vihar area under Tamando police limits for which he had spent nearly ₹5 lakh

Three people including two of his employees tried to take possession of his salon and later they snatched away ₹50,000 from Das after attacking him with a knife

After several visits to Tamando police station, a complaint was lodged but no case was registered

salon illegally, said Das. On October 5, they snatched

away ₹50,000 from Das after attacking him with a knife. The trio even threatened the septuagenarian of dire consequences if he dares to approach the police against them, it was learnt.

A few days later, Das, however, mustered courage to approach the Tamando police.

"After several visits and requests, they (Tamando police) lodged my complaint. But no case was registered on its basis," Das was quoted as saying.

Unable to get resolution from the police station, the elderly man claimed to have approached the deputy commissioner of police, commissioner of police and even the director general of police November 12, but a little has progressed since then.

After several requests, Tamando police interfered but to no avail as they reportedly forced Das to sign a document and hand over the salon to the trio for meagre amount.



DANCE FEST: Artistes from Mayurbhanj performed at the 13th Cuttack Dance Festival at Bali Yatra Ground in the Silver City, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Olympic gold medallist Bindra visits City school

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: As part of the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik this year, Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra interacted with the students of Laxmisagar Government High School here recently.

A football game followed by a reflection session was organised by the school administration for building sports champions from grass-roots level. Notably, OVEP of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was launched in Odisha by the Chief Minister in collaboration with Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust (ABFT) in May this year.

Nuapada-Gunupur line extension yet to get nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: The Centre is yet to sanction the extension of Nuapada-Gunupur railway line upto Therubali, Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnav told Lok Sabha, Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question of Koraput MP (Congress) Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, Vaishnav said that Gunupur-Therubali railway line (79.15 km) was included in 2017-18 Budget subject to requisite approvals.

The Odisha government was requested to share 50 per cent cost of construction and provide land free of cost. However, it has only agreed to provide land free of cost,

he said.

Stating that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the project has been prepared, the minister said its estimated cost stands at ₹1,165.89 crore excluding the land cost.

"At present, the project is not sanctioned, as such, no timeline can be fixed for making it operational," he said.

About the Jeypore-Nabarangpur (41 km) new railway line, Vaishnav said the project was sanctioned on



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

cost sharing basis with the state government.

The state has to provide land free of cost and share 50 per cent of the construction cost. The cost of the new railway line is ₹748 crore. An outlay of ₹81 crore (capital—

₹46 crore, deposit—₹35 crore) has been provided in 2022-23 Budget. Jeypore-Nabarangpur project involves acquisition of 313 hectare private land, 36 hectare government land and diversion of 3.93 hectare forest land, he further said.

About Jeypore-Malkangiri (130 km) new railway line, the minister said the project has also been sanctioned on cost sharing basis with the Odisha government, in which the state has to bear 25 per cent cost of the project.

The cost of the project is ₹2,344 crore. An outlay of ₹13.80 crore (capital—₹11 crore, deposit—₹2.80 crore) has been provided in the 2022-23 Budget.

The project involves acquisition of 467 hectare private land, 211 hectare government land and diversion of 469 hectare forest land. The Odisha government has to expedite the land acquisition process for above two projects, Vaishnav added.

Nabard pegs state's credit potential at ₹1.6L crore



PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has projected Odisha's credit potential for the financial year 2023-24 at ₹1,60,280.30 crore, officials said here Wednesday.

The credit project for priority sector in financial year 2023-24 is 19.02 per cent higher than the previous year's credit estimation of ₹1,34,665 crore, as per Nabard's State Focus Paper for FY 2023-24 released Wednesday. Of the total credit potential for the priority sector, an amount of ₹58,776.16 crore has been assessed under agriculture sector.

The agriculture sector constitutes around 36.67 per cent of the total priority sector, of which ₹53,323.04 crore (90.72%) is estimated under farm credit, which comprises both crop loans and term loans for agriculture and allied activities.

Besides, credit potential under agriculture infrastructure and ancillary activities has been estimated at ₹2,121.51 crore and ₹3,340.61 crore, respectively.

Credit potential under Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector has been assessed at ₹72,297.90 crore, constituting

around 45.10 per cent of the total priority sector. Other sectors consisting of export credit, education, housing, renewable energy and social infrastructure have around 18.23 percent share in the total credit potential under priority sector.

While assessing the projected credit potential under various sectors and sub sectors in the State, the State Focus Paper indicates the critical infrastructure gaps and makes suggestions with a view to overcome the constraints.

Nabard chief general manager C Udayabhaskar said that the bank has been increasing its support for Odisha under the rural infrastructure development, tribal development, watershed development and micro entrepreneurship development among SHG women and other developmental activities leading to growth in the rural livelihood.

Attending the event, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari emphasised upon the need for increasing the bank credit for priority sector in Odisha as the government too has been actively supporting through various schemes like Balaram, Kalia, Samrudhi, Millets Mission, Farmers Producers' Organisations (FPOs) and others.

Be proactive to mitigate man-animal conflict: Amat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: At a time when human-animal conflict has emerged as a huge challenge, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat Wednesday urged upon the department officials to be more proactive to mitigate the conflict.

Addressing a state-level DFOs' conference held at Aranya Bhawan here, Wednesday, Amat said that the state government is giving utmost importance to protection of wildlife and a series of steps are being taken in this regard.

The staffers and officers of the department have to be more proactive to mitigate the conflict, said the minister. "In addition, the department needs to speed up plantation drives, dig more water bodies and hold awareness programmes in



forest and non-forest areas where elephants move," he stated.

Forest, environment and bio-diversity are essentially required

for existence of life in the planet. "Considering their importance, those who are working selflessly will be rewarded and at the same time

Forest, environment and bio-diversity are essentially required for existence of life in the planet. Considering their importance, those who are working selflessly will be rewarded and at the same time non-performers will be punished," Amat said.

PRADIP KUMAR AMAT | FOREST & ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

All-round development of Odisha and making it the No. 1 state in the country is the dream of our Chief Minister. "In that line, we need to complete the forest diversion proposals in a time-bound manner so that railway, road, irrigation and other community-based projects are completed in

time," the minister stressed.

The state government is functioning in line with tenets of ST and 'Mo Sarkar'. "Promotion and pension related works in the department need to be completed by the end of this year so that all will come with renewed energy in the New Year," said the department's Additional Chief Secretary Mona Sharma.

PCCF (Wildlife) Sushil Kumar Popli emphasised on strict enforcement of law, new technology and new ideas.

"A lot of steps are being taken up by this department for afforestation. We need to prepare a three-year master plan for different ranges as per their needs to make afforestation more successful," said principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) and head of forest force (HoFF) Debidutta Biswal.

1.58cr children addicted to substances, govt tells SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: A staggering 1.58 crore children aged between 10 and 17 years in the country are addicted to substances, the government told the Supreme Court Wednesday.

Citing data from a survey conducted following an apex court order, it said alcohol is the most commonly used psychoactive substance by the Indians followed by cannabis and opioids.

About 16 crore people consume alcohol and more than 5.7 crore individuals are affected by harmful or dependent alcohol use and need help. The government said 3.1 crore individuals use cannabis products and about 25 lakh suffer from cannabis dependence, while 2.26 crore people use opioids and approximately 77 lakh individuals require help for opioid use problems.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, told a bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna that following the apex court's 2016 verdict, it had conducted a nationwide survey on the extent and pattern of substance use in India. In compliance with the December

14, 2016 directions of the SC, Bhati said, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had completed a first-of-its-kind survey to generate a national database on substance use.

Senior advocate HS Phoolka, appearing for NGO 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan' contended the government is not complying with the directions of the SC issued in 2016 and has not covered all aspects in its national plan to combat substance abuse.

The bench asked Phoolka whether he is aggrieved by non-compliance of the order or if something more could have been done in the plan.

Though the national plan has been complied with, Phoolka said, more aspects could have been covered. The bench said it is tagging the matter with a case the court had taken up on its own which also deals, more or less, with the same issue and is being heard by the Chief Justice's bench.

Bhati said various reports have been filed by different ministries in the case and agreed that the matter can be tagged with the case being heard by the Chief Justice.



In its affidavit, the ministry said it conducted the survey through the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) during 2018.

"Alcohol is the most common psychoactive substance used by Indians (among the substances included in this survey). Nationally, about 14.6 per cent of the population (between 10 and 75 year of age) uses alcohol. In terms of absolute numbers, there are about 16 crore persons who consume alcohol in the country," the survey said.

It added the use of alcohol is

considerably higher among men (27.3 per cent) as compared to women (1.6 per cent) and states with the highest prevalence of alcohol use are Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa.

"For every one woman who consumes alcohol, there are 17 men consuming alcohol. Among alcohol users, country liquor or 'desi sharab' (about 30 per cent) and spirits or Indian Made Foreign Liquor (about 30 per cent) are the predominantly consumed beverages," the survey said.

It said after alcohol, cannabis and opioids are the next commonly used substances in India and about

2.8 per cent of the population (3.1 crore individuals) reports having used any cannabis product within the previous year.

"The use of cannabis was further differentiated between the legal form of cannabis (bhang) and other illegal cannabis products (ganja and charas). Use of these cannabis products was observed to be about 2 per cent (approximately 2.2 crore persons) for bhang and about 1.2 per cent (approximately 1.3 crore persons) for illegal cannabis products. States with the highest prevalence of cannabis use are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi," it said.

The government said to address the problem of drug abuse among citizens of this country, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated and implemented the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) under which the government is taking sustained and coordinated action for arresting the problem of substance abuse among the youth and women.

It said the prime objective of NAPDDR is to focus on preventive education, awareness generation, identification, counseling, treat-

ment and rehabilitation of individuals with substance dependence, training and capacity building of service providers through collaborative efforts of the central and state governments and NGOs.

The affidavit elaborated on the details of work done by the NAPDDR like launch of 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) in 372 most vulnerable districts under which a massive community outreach is being done through more than 8,000 youth volunteers.

In another affidavit filed by the Ministry of Education, the government said it has taken steps to create awareness about substance use and has adopted specific content in the school curriculum under the aegis of the National Education Policy, 2020.

"That at present, concerns regarding substance abuse, awareness and development of life skill for prevention of substance abuse have already been integrated in existing resource materials/ textbooks/ supplementary materials developed by the NCERT and these are regularly disseminated through capacity building program (for teachers) organised by the NCERT," it said.

BMC meet with RWAs ahead of Hockey WC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: As the Capital city is gearing up to host Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday urged the representatives of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to come forward and join hands with this noble initiative of the government.

Holding a meeting with RWAs, the BMC authorities deliberated upon cityscape and sanitation priorities and roles of residents. The first phase meeting threw light on how the City would look like and what should be the cooperation from RWAs. All gated communities and RWAs need to follow waste management rule 2016 and prepare their action plan accordingly, said BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange.

The societies can contribute towards the initiative by branding their area and complying with five-metre radius cleaning norm. They can also make some activities to boost of residents and citizens. Kulange declared about ranking of the RWAs based on their activities and a parameter of 13 points was projected to the participants.

Sports policy soon for students: Rohit Pujari

RD Women's University hosts inter-college women's hockey championship



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: The state government is planning to come up with a students' sports policy to nurture college and university-level sportspersons, said Higher Education (HE) Minister Rohit Pujari during the inter-college women's hockey championship at Rama Devi Women's University here Wednesday.

The HE Minister said that the policy will focus development of sports infrastructure as well as sportspersons at colleges and universities for holding inter-college and inter-university competitions. According to Pujari, Odisha is only state to host hockey world cup twice. "Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has a vision to make Odisha a sports hub. For this, we need to create the best sports facilities and

nurture talented sportspersons who can bring glory to the state. Our policy will help achieving the feat," said Pujari, hoping that all colleges should have the hockey infrastructure on their campus. Sports and Youth Services Minister Tushar Kanti Behera said the state government has set up hockey stadiums in 17 blocks of Sundargarh. The inter-college women's hockey championship at Rama Devi Women's University here aimed at promoting the sport as the state is all set to host hockey World Cup in January next year. A walkathon and signature campaign was also organised on the occasion. In a bid to promote sports, especially hockey, the state government had written to all District Education Officers (DEOs) to prepare plans for organising annual sports activities at educational institutions.



COMMON MAN'S DEMAND: Members of SUCI (C) staged a protest in front of Collectorate in Cuttack seeking rollback of petrol and diesel prices, Wednesday

OPUS infra boost to livelihood avenues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: Odisha Patita Udhara Samiti (OPUS) Wednesday launched 'Swabhimana Kakshya' at Ekamra Nilaya here to help the beggars and destitute earn their livelihood with self-respect. The facility was inaugurated by the additional Commissioner of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Laxmikant Sethi. During the inauguration programme, the beneficiaries showcased their skills and launched their hand-made products such as phenyl, door mats, jute baskets, home decor items and many more which would be sold in the market. The initiative by OPUS is aimed at making beggars and destitute,

who have been staying in Ekamra Nilaya, self-reliant. One of the volunteers of OPUS Matrumayee Priyadarshini said, "The beggars, including rape victims and acid attack victims, are rescued from different places and brought here to help them explore livelihood opportunities." The proceeds from the sales will be credited to their bank accounts, thereby allowing them to become self-sufficient and shun begging. "OPUS is taking care of more than 90 beggars and destitute who are residing in Ekamra Nilaya," said Priyadarshini. "The inmates are being taught about general etiquette, hygiene and skills for making products and their use in daily life. In the coming days, OPUS will try to cover more parts of the state," she added.



OUAT releases coloured broiler 'Kalinga Pallishree'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT) is back in a big way with release of 'OUAT Kalinga Pallishree' a coloured broiler bird towards meeting the expectations of poultry farmers of the state. The parent stock of this poultry variety was liquidated due to incidence of bird flu three years back. During this period with intensive efforts AICRP on Poultry, the breeding program was revived which

resulted in development of this promising poultry variety for the benefit of the farmers of the state. This variety of poultry is well adapted to semi-intensive system of rearing across the state and is known for better meat quality and consumer's preference. Releasing the first chick and supplying it to the farmers under the brand name of 'OUAT Kalinga Pallishree', Vice Chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul applauded OUAT's efforts to meet the expectations of farmers in general and women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in particular.

He emphasized the contribution of poultry in livelihoods and empowerment of rural farm women. Now, the farmers can avail the chicks through 31 Krishi Vigyan Kendras of OUAT across the state. OUAT Kalinga Pallishree broiler chicks can grow up to 1.5 kg in 5th week with optimum feed conversion ratio. In February 2020, the state government had sealed the poultry farm of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in view of the flu outbreak there. The farm was sealed after culling of the birds and burying of carcasses. The move had occurred after Bhopal-based National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIH-SAD) had confirmed the H5N1 — the avian influenza virus — in the samples of dead birds from the poultry farm at the College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry under the OUAT January 27, 2020.

NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY

CM: Let's pledge to use energy judiciously

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: On the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that Energy conservation is extremely significant in laying a strong foundation for a sustainable future. In his official Twitter account CM said Energy conservation is extremely significant in laying a strong foundation for a sustainable future. On National Energy Conservation Day, let's all pledge to use energy judiciously, ensure zero wastage and spread awareness on the importance of energy conservation. Recently at Make in Odisha conclave, Energy department released the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy (OREP)-2022 that envisages addition of 10,000-mega watt (MW) renewable energy capacity in the state. To help decarbonise the energy sector by promoting renewable en-



ergy, the government has brought the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy, 2022. The policy aims to make industries increase renewable energy production as they have to do so as per the renewable purchase obligation (RPO) trajectory fixed by the Centre within 2030. The industries and power distribution companies (discoms) will have to achieve 43 per cent RPO by 2030. The department also executed three MoUs with leading central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) for an investment of Rs 51,000 crore in state.

Grand get-together of 'BJB Friends' organised

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: A congregation of BJB Friends, the Alumni Association of the Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar (BJB) College Bhubaneswar, was held recently on the college campus. Hundreds of alumni of the institute, under the aegis of 'BJB Friends' joined the meet and recollected their joyous past, in a special session held at the administrative block auditorium. Minister for Science & Technology, Ashok Panda, Rajya Sabha MP, Amar Patnaik and Commissioner of Police Soumendra Kumar Priyadarshi addressed the gathering, as one among the premier alumni of the institute. On this occasion, a ceremonial lamp was lit up to pay homage to

the valiant hero Buxi Jagabandhu. Following this, an interactive session was held where the BJBians shared their experiences what they inherited from the College campus along with their achievements after their studies. Meanwhile, Padma Shri, Aditya Prasad Das, a 1971-alumnus was awarded for his lifetime contribution to the field of Science and Technology.

Similarly, Anukampa Das, a meritorious student of 2022 was conferred with a special trophy for her multifarious achievements. The trophy was handed over to her by the Former Minister & Deputy Speaker Bibhuti Bhusan Singh Mardaraj, and his son and former MLA of Khandapada, Siddharth Sekhar Singh. Minister Panda, during his address, highlighted the indis-

pensability of a dedicated auditorium for the 'BJB Friends'. Similarly, Priyadarshi emphasized the glorious past and value based education. Among others, Chairperson of the BJB Friends, Debashis Patnaik, Secretary Satyabrata Dhupal and Principal of the BJB College Niranjan Mishra interacted with the alumnus in an hour-long get-together.

Continued from P1 Plea for Sambalpur...

"We have little doubt that this is abject failure of police. They IGP and DGP have assured us that what has happened will not happen again and they take personal responsibility that complete peace is maintained. We have indicated to the police that their ability to control will be closely watched by us," the bench recorded in its order. Further, the Supreme Court rejected the resolution passed by the Central Action Committee of Western Odisha and held the committee shall withdraw their strike unconditionally as there is no hope of formation of additional benches.

Poaching scourge...
An elephant was killed December 7 was allegedly killed by some poachers in Jenabili forest range of Similipal National Park (SNP). The poachers then allegedly, in collusion with some Forest department officials tries to dispose of the carcass by burning it. It was due to the intervention of the locals that the matter came to light and a proper probe was launched into the incident.

76% of young Indians dream of a self-funded wedding

According to data from a recent national poll on wedding spending, 53 per cent of Millennials prefer a small wedding with fewer than 100 people, followed by 31 per cent who want a medium-sized wedding with between 100 and 250 attendees, and only 16 per cent who choose a large wedding with more than 250 guests. Although theme and destination weddings are popular, the poll found that over 76 per cent of respondents from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities preferred a traditional wedding. IndiaLends, an online marketplace for loans and credit cards, and Betterhalf, an AI-based matrimony website, together conducted the poll in 24 Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities throughout the nation. The post-pandemic wedding study included around 2100 participants in the 21-35 age range, 93 per cent of whom were salaried employees and 5 per cent were self-employed. In the years following the pandemic, young couples now prefer

small, private weddings to big, fat Indian weddings. Couples can concentrate on creating a one-of-a-kind premium experience by splurging on personalisation, fancy locations, and several ceremonies when the guest list is reduced to family and close friends. The youth are shouldering most, but not all, of the financial burden on families, relying on their savings and also arranging additional funding from reputable lending sources. The pre- and post-wedding ceremonies, as well as the venue and food, photo shoot and filming, and even the honeymoon, can be paid for thanks to this. IndiaLends Founder and CEO Gaurav Chopra said, "Tradition and culture have always been an intrinsic part of India and Indian families, as evident from our wedding-spend survey, which shows how the youth of today still want to celebrate their big day with family and close friends in traditional style with pomp and splendour yet keeping it intimate. At the same



The post-pandemic wedding study included around 2100 participants in the 21-35 age range, 93 per cent of whom were salaried employees and 5 per cent were self-employed. Survey revealed that self-funded weddings were becoming the next big trend, with over 70 per cent of Millennials and Gen Z saying they would plan and finance their own wedding. Some 54 per cent of the respondents said they would opt for mid-size loans of Rs 1-5 lakh; about 40 per cent of the youth are willing to invest up to Rs 10 lakh on wedding and related expenses; and 35 per cent don't mind spending Rs 5-10 lakh

time, it is heartening to see that a majority of the respondents in the 21-35 age bracket is focusing on fi-

nancial stability before they decide to tie the knot and settle down. "To me, this reflects their core val-

ues, as they do not wish to impose a financial burden on their families. Going forward, financing a wedding will become an important component of online lending platforms, thus giving the youth the financial freedom to own their dream wedding." Interestingly, the results from the survey show how Millennials and Gen Z from both the salaried and non-salaried groups are shifting towards wedding financing options such as wedding loans. Some 54 per cent of the respondents said they would opt for mid-size loans of Rs 1-5 lakh; about 40 per cent of the youth are willing to invest up to Rs 10 lakh on wedding and related expenses; and 35 per cent don't mind spending Rs 5-10 lakh. Significantly, 57 per cent of the participants said they would consider digital-lending platforms over traditional banks for wedding loans. In the above context, 68 per cent of the youth reported that financial stability was a top priority when it came to marriage and achiev-

ing other personal goals. The survey also revealed that self-funded weddings were becoming the next big trend, with over 70 per cent of Millennials and Gen Z saying they would plan and finance their own wedding. Betterhalf co-founder & CEO Pawan Gupta said, "It was a pleasure to work with IndiaLends on our combined wedding-spending survey, which threw up many interesting facts about how the youth perceive a wedding. Any wedding ceremony, big or small, involves careful decision-making, planning, budgeting, and execution. I am glad to see that millennials are not just aware of what a wedding entails, but they are also willing to take financial responsibility for the nuptials. Our survey findings also indicate that the youth still dream of having a traditional, albeit self-funded, wedding. This will pave the way for new financial products and services tailored to wedding needs." IANS

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS
Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Let us keep flaming in our heart the fire of progress.

THE MOTHER



Recipe for Disaster

As climate chaos threatens the Global North and the lifestyles of the world's richest people, we might expect to hear elites demand a rapid exit from reliance on fossil fuels. Instead, a controversial idea is coming to the fore: dimming the sun. Advocates claim that through science fiction-like methods, known as solar geo-engineering, we can dial down the planet's thermostat by decreasing the amount of energy that reaches the atmosphere. The idea has gained enough traction for rich philanthropists to notice and for the White House to fund research. There's just one problem: it's a recipe for disaster.

One technological proposal currently making headlines is Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI), with advocates claiming releasing aerosols into the upper atmosphere and bouncing sunlight back into space would reduce surface temperatures. This idea is gaining traction at a time when some contend that we should be working on a plan B because it is too late to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius as agreed in the 2015 Paris climate agreement. But giving up this ambition would be a gift to carbon polluters, as International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol recently explained, and the notion that solar geo-engineering could ever be a plan B is false and dangerous.

Experts have repeatedly debunked the idea that we can "control" the earth's thermostat. The world's foremost authority on climate science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has warned that solar geo-engineering is not a credible solution. Climate models show that masking global heating with sunlight reduction could bring massive changes in atmospheric circulation and alter rainfall patterns – such as the monsoon – with especially pronounced effects in countries that are already experiencing increasingly severe and frequent storms, droughts, fires, and other climate-related events.

To work, solar geo-engineering technologies like SAI would require unprecedented international cooperation. Governments would need to align to get chemical-spraying airplanes off the ground, for example, implying that only powerful countries or military regimes could provide the necessary infrastructure. Chemical mining and production would require additional infrastructure on a massive scale. And all of this would need to be sustained for decades or longer. If a new government stopped an aerosol injection programme after regime change, it could trigger a "termination shock" that sent global temperatures soaring, in line with existing greenhouse-gas levels in the atmosphere.

Despite this, Harvard University is set to test the equipment associated with SAI in the context of a controversial research project. But this method is effectively ungovernable. That is why hundreds of academics are calling for a Solar Geo-engineering Non-Use Agreement to block public funds for the technology, ban outdoor experiments, patenting, and deployment, and to counter support in international fora and policy discussions.

In addition to the technological and political limitations, prominent lawyers say solar geo-engineering is at odds with international human rights and environmental law. If geo-engineering changes weather patterns, it could infringe on people's rights to life, health, and a livelihood. Moreover, SAI could violate the legal duty to avoid causing transboundary environmental harm. A technology set to impact the climate on the global scale would also require everyone potentially affected to have a say – an impossible idea.

But if we know these schemes won't work, are full of risks, cannot be tested or governed, and delay near-term climate action, why are we seeing increased momentum and support for them? Put simply, they give big polluters a get-out-of-jail-free card and allow them to patent and profit from the relevant technologies and associated infrastructures.

Oil and gas companies have been researching and patenting (solar and other) geo-engineering technologies for decades. In fact, most solar geo-engineering models rely on large-scale deployment of Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) to deal with the continued production and combustion of fossil fuels. Proponents of CDR offer carbon removal offsets to polluters, undermining long-term solutions and exacerbating the climate emergency. Worryingly, calls for CDR gained momentum at this year's COP27, which risks blowing a massive hole in the Paris agreement.

While geo-engineering supporters often say it is in the interest of the disadvantaged Global South, the Global South isn't buying it. In fact, most groups in the global climate movement reject solar geo-engineering entirely. Indigenous communities have rallied against solar geo-engineering experiments in places such as Alaska and Sweden. In reality, it is the richest and most polluting countries (especially the United States) that are researching and funding these technologies.

Once the world awakens to the reality that there is no quick fix to remove carbon from the atmosphere and no substitute for a rapid phaseout of fossil fuels, solar geo-engineering might gain undeserved credibility as a last-ditch option – full of risks but supposedly without alternative. We must not allow that scenario to come true.

This means that we must not allow it to become normalised through policy debates, private initiatives, government proposals, and research. The science is clear: We can still prevent irreversible harms to ecosystems and human rights. But the only way to avoid further climate disasters is real climate action now. We must accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels – and leave the science fiction on the shelf.

The writer is Deputy Director of the Climate and Energy Program at the Center for International Environmental Law.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. HENRY FORD

If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary. JIM ROHN

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. WARREN BUFFETT

WORDSWORTH

Doohickey

It's yet another of these hand-waving terms for a thing that's too unimportant to have a name of its own, or whose name you have for the moment forgotten. In this case, it refers to some unspecified object or small device, especially a mechanical one. An example is in The Tommyknockers by Stephen King (1987): "You're almost done with this part. Just solder that red wire to that point to the left of the long doohickey." The best guess we can make is that it began life as US Navy slang in the early twentieth century. The first recorded example appeared in the magazine Our Navy in November 1914: "We were compelled to christen articles beyond our ken with such names as 'do-hickeys', 'gadgets' and 'gilguys'." There is some doubt where doohickey comes from, though the authorities mostly point to its being a blend of doodad (at first a trivial or superfluous ornament, known from slightly earlier) and hickey, which now is more usually a pimple or a love bite but which at the beginning of the twentieth century could be an odd person or something of little consequence. Incidentally, the Sailors' Word-Book of 1867 says a gilguys is "A guy for tricing up, or bearing a boom or derrick. Often applied to inefficient guys."

FOCUS NATION

CONTRASTING RESULTS

The recent Assembly elections' results are a bit puzzling with the BJP securing landslide victory in Gujarat but losing Himachal Pradesh to Congress and its power in Municipal Corporation of Delhi to AAP. However, there is certainly on one front – the image of Prime Minister Modi, possibly more than that of BJP, stands tall. There can be no denying that his appeal remains unchallenged despite many shortcomings of the Central government, especially on the economic front.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

SOME ANALYSTS TALK OF THE GUJARAT MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT BUT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS IS CENTRED ON GROWTH, NOT REAL OR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Congress, which largely focused on bread-and-butter issues won in Himachal, but it was voted in Gujarat with its vote share dropping by about 14%. It was indeed surprising that neither the sufferings of the pandemic influenced the electorate nor even the promise of Congress offering a compensation of Rs 4 lakh per victim. And while people are unhappy with the general price rise, especially that of cooking gas cylinders and petrol, the Congress couldn't encash on it. Its seats went down from 77 to 17.

This time, the AAP appears to be the biggest beneficiary. It opened its account in Modi's state but only time will tell whether it can emerge as a force in Gujarat in coming years. It did cut into the votes of the Congress, but that the grand old party would have such a disastrous result, despite its traditional vote base of tribals and Muslims in the districts of south and east Gujarat of the Narmada and Tapi river belt, is difficult to fathom.

The seriousness of the campaign by Modi, who took time off to address no less than 31 rallies and undertook major road shows in Ahmedabad and Surat, while his Home Minister Amit Shah camped for days in the state is demonstration enough of how seriously the BJP took the polls, despite reports that its rule would continue. On the other hand, this seriousness was not quite manifest in the Congress, and it seems to have expected a poor show.

Additionally, organisational muscle, which includes financial resources, as also leadership potential are important factors in winning elections. The obvious



With caste-class and religion playing a big role in present-day elections, it's about time the Congress weaves a new framework based on societal consolidation, economic recovery and spread the same among subaltern communities

reason is that the electorate may be literate but not educated enough to weigh the pros and cons of the deteriorating economic and social situation in the country. Plus, the Congress did not have an able leader in the state and the organisational structure remained quite weak.

Delving into the problem, it needs to be stated that less educated people are swayed by the hype which Modi has been generating in terms of technology in education, industrial development and the constructions of flyovers and highways though these hardly benefit the masses. Heavy industries do not generate sufficient employment, while agriculture in Gujarat is not quite in healthy state.

Some analysts talk of the Gujarat model of development but our understanding of this is centred on growth, not real or inclusive development. That is the reason why the cities are prospering compared to the villages, the rich and the upper middle class becoming prosperous and the gap between the rich and the poor growing. However, it goes to the credit of Modi for ending the state's water crisis in Saurashtra, which benefitted the common man. Also reports indicate that every Gujarat household now gets piped water.

Fighting elections and choosing the right issues appears to be the forte of the BJP. And what helps is that it has all along been a centralised party with local leaders not given the same importance.

Though it is a cadre-based party, decisions are taken at the Delhi headquarters by the core group, headed by Modi. This has been a long trend in Indian politics since the time of Indira Gandhi and the BJP has followed this scrupulously. But it doesn't seem to work for the Congress anymore.

However, Himachal has exemplified the limits of Modi's ability to single-handedly win elections. It is true that the state only reinforced a trend of throwing out incumbents as has been the case in MP, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. Though Modi sought to woo the voters by showcasing himself rather than the local candidates, the anti-incumbency wave got precedence. But a big factor, which may have not got the attention it deserved was that as many as 21 BJP rebels contested the polls as Independents and spoiled the party's chances of emerging victorious.

On AAP's front, while it awaits bagging the status of a national party having opened its account in Gujarat, its historic win in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls, dislodging the BJP and with it the Modi's popular image, is a reason to be elated. Undoubtedly, Arvind Kejriwal has turned out to be a leader who has the ability of understanding the needs and demands of the common people and delivering, which makes a vital difference to their lives. Given the fact that AAP is already ruling in Delhi, there are expectations that

the 'double-engine' government will improve the life of citizens in the national capital, provided given a free hand.

Finally, the coming year is crucial for political parties as elections are due in three Hindi belt states along with Karnataka. Some analysts are talking of a combined opposition with Congress giving the leadership. But the problem is that the acceptability of Rahul Gandhi as the leader of a united front, if he so chooses, may be somewhat difficult at this point. The new Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has a responsibility to seriously try and forge unity and fight elections jointly. And while a section of analysts may dismiss the Bharat Jodo Yatra as inconsequential, it can't be denied that it just might have the potential of resurrecting the Congress' fortunes in the long run. The yatra has on the one hand spread the message of countering the politics of hate and division, and on the other, reached out to the masses. In the Gandhian spirit!

The focus of the ruling dispensation of playing with the religious sentiment of the masses has, no doubt, paid dividends for the BJP. Meanwhile, reports suggest that work around the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya is progressing fast and should be ready before the big election of 2024, the timing of which should pay dividends.

With caste-class and religion playing a big role in present-day elections, it's about time the Congress weaves a new framework based on societal consolidation, economic recovery and spread the same among subaltern communities. It exacerbates confidence that Rahul Gandhi's yatra, touching on the masses' problems and calling for transformation of the socio-economic order, will yield dividends in the coming year. The Himachal result has given it this confidence. Whether it will percolate down to results is anybody's guess, but a resurrection is a big challenge. A bigger one being of countering the Modi magic.

The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata.

SPECTRUM ARAB WORLD

A winning World Cup strategy

For decades, the Arab world has suffered from disunity.

While it is connected by geography, language, and culture, the region's lack of cohesion has long allowed foreign powers to plunder its resources. The legacy of colonial divide-and-rule tactics remains pervasive, and parochialism has prevented Arabs from leveraging their huge oil wealth and relatively educated populations. But the FIFA World Cup has shown us another way.

Football has emerged as a great unifier following a string of unexpected victories for Arab countries. In November, Saudi Arabia beat Argentina, Tunisia defeated France, and Morocco routed Belgium. Then, during the knockout stage, Morocco made history by eliminating both Spain and Portugal to become the first Arab country to secure a place in the semifinals.

Morocco's victories were the result of a perfectly executed plan devised by coach Walid Regragui, who placed goalkeeper Yassine Bounou at the center of the team's strategy. Bounou repeatedly stymied Spain's attempts to score, and Morocco went on to eliminate the team in penalty shootouts. Nor could Portugal's attackers find a way

to beat Bounou, and Regragui's side pulled off a stunning 1-0 win.

"I'm trying to think of when such a shock as this has happened in the World Cup," one commentator told the BBC. "Pinch me, I'm dreaming," Bounou said.

The team's success is no dream. Morocco knew it was an underdog from the beginning. Its David and Goliath-like plan involves a defense-heavy 4-1-4-1 formation that leverages the strength of its star goalkeeper. But every position is crucial and requires utmost dedication to a single goal.

Morocco's players have shown that dedication, inspiring people throughout the region. Following the team's victories, Arab children danced in the streets, and fans and players in Qatar were seen waving the Palestinian flag in shows of Arab solidarity. Every winning Arab team made sure that their group picture and public statement included signs and words of solidarity with Palestine.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Bounou, who also plays for Sevilla in Spain's La Liga, has become something of a role model for Arab youth. Tall and agile, his confidence, humility, and sense of community make him stand out in a sport whose stars are

more often known for displays of swagger and arrogance.

The same vices have held back the Arab world more broadly. While basing a team's strategy on cohesion might seem like a no-brainer, Arab states usually find this hard to achieve – in sport and in life. True, Algeria's Taoufik Makhloufi won the 1,500-meter run gold at the 2012 London Summer Olympics, Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj bagged gold medals for the 1,500-meter and 5,000-meter runs in Athens in 2004, and in 1996, Syria's Ghada Shouaa won gold at the Atlanta games heptathlon. But all these players won in individual events. When it comes to team sports, Arab countries usually fail miserably.

Similar shortcomings are reflected in business and trade in the region. The Arab League, for example, was created to foster greater unity in the Arab world. But intra-Arab trade still accounts for less than 10% of Arab countries' imports and exports. Family-based small businesses may thrive, but Arab corporations barely make a dent in global commerce. This seems unlikely to change anytime soon. The World Economic Forum estimates that over 75% of the Arab world's successful companies are family-owned.

Disunity has serious political consequences as well. The absence of a unified strategy to address famine in Sudan, a country often thought of as the region's breadbasket, is surely making the situation there worse. Likewise, Palestinians' internal division when it comes to control of their territories has contributed to their failure to achieve the dignity and freedom they so desperately need. In the last Israeli elections, Arab political parties couldn't agree on a unified slate of candidates for the Knesset, wasting hundreds of thousands of votes as a result. Even citizens of wealthy Arab countries face hunger and literacy problems.

Arab unity based on well-executed and realistic strategies would make a huge difference to the region. And it is here that Morocco's World Cup performance should inspire us. Only by applying more broadly the concepts of selflessness and teamwork that have been central to the team's success can young Arabs and future politicians, who remain glued to their TV sets as Morocco makes history, translate their shared enthusiasm into real-life unity.

The writer is an award-winning Palestinian journalist.



Daoud Kuttab

EVEN CITIZENS OF WEALTHY ARAB COUNTRIES FACE HUNGER AND LITERACY PROBLEMS

United Congress

Sir, Amid the turf war within the Himachal Pradesh Congress, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu took charge as Chief Minister, while Mukesh Agnihotri, a former journalist, took oath as his deputy. On Saturday, the announcement of Sukhu's election as the leader of the Congress legislature party led to protests from supporters of Pratibha Singh, the widow of the six-term former Chief Minister, Virbhadra Singh. However, Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Rahul Gandhi hugged Pratibha at the ceremony and paid floral tributes to Virbhadra Singh's portrait as the simmering tension appeared to evaporate. NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Combating cyclone

Sir, Cyclone Mandous battered 12 districts of Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry. Speedy winds over 75 km/hr tested the nerves of the citizens and authorities alike. As usual the National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Management Authorities toiled hard to offer solace to the affected. Timely warning by the IMD and coast guard saved fishermen from untold misery. The anticipation quotient of the authorities definitely helped. State governments made sure that the contingency plans were in place. Commendably, rescue and relief operations were not hampered by the authorities' shouldering triple responsibility - rescue, relief and rehabilitation. Balancing cleanliness and clearance, the rescue teams swiftly came to terms with the ground realities. The seriousness and sensitivity, enthusiasm and preparedness shown by different units in foiling the fury of Mandous is laudable. Over the years, governments have learnt their lessons in stemming cyclones to the best of their ability. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Incredible run

Sir, Morocco's incredible run in the FIFA 2022 World Cup has inspired an outpouring of patriotism and support in the Arab countries. In the quarterfinals, while the odds remained stacked heavily against Morocco, Regragui's side created yet another European upset, as the indomitable Maghrebs rewrote Africa's footballing history by defeating Portugal 1-0, totally disregarding Fernando Santos team's annihilation of Switzerland with 6-1 in the round of 16. Morocco's tactical discipline in defence, speed on the counterattack and a dash of goal-keeping flair have all contributed to its stellar show in this world cup. Irrespective of whichever way the result goes for Morocco in the semi-final against the mighty France, the Atlas Lions have already shown that the gap between big and small teams in international football is fast narrowing down. Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
B-15, Ransubbarhi Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

of the day quote

The Congress is not a cadre-based party like the BJP and CPI (M)
JAIRAM RAMESH | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

The Janata Dal (United) represents the aspirations of the underdogs in Bihar and a merger with currently ally Rashtriya Janata Dal will be suicidal for the party
UPENDRA KUSHWAHA | JD(U) PARLIAMENTARY BOARD CHIEF

No proposal to open colleges for Muslim women
BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Bhopal: Over 1K families on streets

Bhopal: Over 1,000 Muslim families living barely half a km away from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal have been made to survive on their own under the open sky as their homes built in an illegal colony were recently demolished by the administration. These families, who were living on the Railways' land for the last 30 years, were supposed to be rehabilitated using Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief funds. In February this year, the administration had issued notice for demolition of homes and, the process began December 12. Rachana Dhingra, an activist working for the gas leak-affected victims claimed that around 400 families were shifted to the Waqf Board's land, while approximately 1,100 families were left with no choice but to survive along the railway tracks.

Rain batters Nilgiris district

Udhagamandalam (TN): Heavy rains since Tuesday night threw normal life out of gear in the high-range Nilgiris district while rail services were hit as boulders and trees fell on the track. The district administration declared a holiday for schools and colleges Wednesday as a result of the heavy rainfall. Also, services on the Nilgiris Mountain Railway (NMR) have been cancelled for two days from December 15 in view of boulders and trees falling across the track, a Railway press release said.

Woman shot dead over property dispute

New Delhi: A 42-year-old woman was killed while a man was injured after a man opened fire at them over a property dispute in Delhi's Jharoda Kalan village, police said Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Mukesh, a resident of village Jharoda Kalan while on the basis of the statement given by the injured, Kaptan, police has registered a case under Sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC and 25/27 of the Arms Act at Baba Haridas Nagar police station.

Two killed in tiger attacks

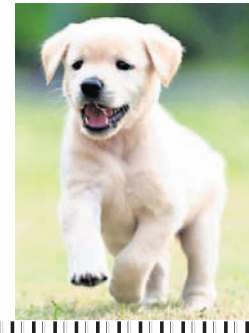
Chandrapur: Two persons were killed in separate incidents of tiger attack in eastern Maharashtra's Chandrapur district Wednesday, forest officials said. As many as 49 persons have died in 'man-animal conflicts' in the district since the start of the year, said a senior forest official of Chandrapur Circle. The district is home to the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. Baburao Kamble, a 65-year-old farmer, was killed in Rudrapur village in Saoli tehsil while he was on his way to his farm Wednesday morning.



Farmers are not getting fertilizer and are being harassed for not repaying loans of ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh, while big loans of industrialists are waived by the banks by rolling out red carpets
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHOCKING INCIDENT

Two youths in UP's Bareilly cut off the ear of a puppy and the tail of another one. The two pups, bleeding profusely, were then locked in a room. The youths were said to be under the influence of alcohol when they did this dastardly deed. Sources said that they even ate up the ear of the puppy



Udhayanidhi's elevation triggers 'Sunrise vs Sonrise' debate

Chief Minister M K Stalin made a reshuffle of portfolios held by 10 Ministers and allocated the Special Programme Implementation (SPI) portfolio, held by him to Udhayanidhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 14: For DMK, Udhayanidhi Stalin, who was included in his father's Cabinet on Wednesday, is the rising sun of the party. Yet, how critics saw the induction was predictable: another chapter that could be titled "sonrise" in the history of the Dravidian party, which for the last five decades has been controlled by his grandfather, the late M Karunanidhi and father M K Stalin. However, the party is 'unapolo-

getic' about appointing sons and daughters in key posts while others are not, political commentator Sumanth C Raman feels.

Udhayanidhi, the 45-year old actor-producer is hailed as the "rising sun" by DMK workers, in obvious reference to the party's Rising Sun symbol. TRB Raaja, a three-time legislator from Mannargudi constituency and son of Lok Sabha MP T R Baalu tweeted: "The power to drive away the darkness is possible only by the sun. Chinnavar (junior) Udhayanidhi Stalin will shine



as a new sun in the Tamil Nadu government.

Raaja, also DMK IT wing chief wished him to do wonders as a minister. Udhayanidhi's "down to earth and friendly approach" would aid in extending his helping hand

to the hidden sports talents of Tamil Nadu in his new role as Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Raaja said and exuded confidence this would be the golden era for sports in the state.

Not just the younger crop of DMK leaders, but seniors like TKS Elangovan also welcomed the elevation of the Youth Wing leader of the party, one of the two children of the Stalin-Durga couple.

"Udhayanidhi has the support of senior leaders. He has earned the mass appeal by working hard in his Chepauk-Triplicane constituency," Elangovan told PTI. Others like Higher Education minister K Ponnudiyil have also been backing Udhayanidhi's inclusion in the cabinet for long. However, the opposition is not

amused with the move and the AIADMK and BJP dubbed it as the "new age dynasty politics and rise of a son once again in DMK." AIADMK spokesperson Kovai Satyan remarked "the prince charming is being made a cabinet minister and in future he will be sworn as a king."

Citing the campaign video that is going viral regarding Stalin's promise of keeping his family away from such posts, Satyan said "Stalin has lied to people. People who worked for the party are languishing in the streets and the way the party is functioning is undemocratic."

He also claimed the young DMK leader will become deputy chief minister before the 2024 Parliamentary elections and be the DMK's CM candidate in the 2026 Assembly polls.

Chinese spy ship exits Indian Ocean Region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Chinese missile and satellite tracking ship 'Yuan Wang V' has exited the Indian Ocean after spending over a week in the region, people familiar with the development said Wednesday. The Chinese spy ship, known to be fitted with various tracking and surveillance devices, entered the Indian Ocean around December 5 ahead of a plan by India for a likely test firing of a long-range ballistic missile in the Bay of Bengal, they said. The Indian Navy kept a close eye on the movement of the ship.



The docking of the ship at Hambantota port in August had triggered a diplomatic row between India and Sri Lanka. Open source intelligence expert Damien Symon on Monday tweeted that "Yuan Wang 5, #China's missile and satellite tracking vessel has entered the #IndianOcean region."

There was no official comment on either entry or exit of the ship from the Indian Ocean Region. The visit of the Chinese ship to the Indian Ocean comes amid increasing concerns over growing forays into the region by Chinese military and research vessels.

India is bolstering defence and security ties in the Indian Ocean with like-minded countries in the backdrop of concerns over China's growing forays into the region, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy.

Top court refuses early setting up of bench to hear plea of Bilkis



Bano had moved the apex court against the release of 11 convicts in a case of gang-rape and murder of her family members during the 2002 Gujarat riots

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 14: The Supreme Court Wednesday told the counsel, representing Bilkis Bano, that the plea for urgent listing should not be mentioned frequently, saying "it is very irritating".

Bano had moved the apex court against the release of 11 convicts in a case of gang-rape and murder of her family members during the 2002 Gujarat riots. Advocate Shobha Gupta, representing Bilkis Bano, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud the writ petition was listed Tuesday but it was not taken up.

The bench told the counsel that the writ petition will be listed and added, "Don't keep mentioning the same thing again and again. It is very irritating". It further emphasized that the matter will be listed and asked the counsel to avoid mentioning the matter frequently.

On Tuesday, Justice Bela M. Trivedi, sitting on a bench led by Justice Ajay Rastogi, had recused from the hearing petition by Bilkis.

The matter as a consequence would be posted before another bench.

In the plea, Bano said release of all the convicts came as a shock. The petition, filed through advocate Shobha Gupta, said: "The premature release of all the convicts came as a shock not only to the petitioner, to her grown up daughters, to her family, but also to the society at large, nationally and internationally, and the society across segments had shown their anger, disappointment, distrust and protest to the clemency shown by the Government by releasing criminals like the 11 convicts of the case." Terming the release order mechanical, the plea said the en masse premature release of the convicts in much talked about case of Bilkis Bano, has shaken conscience of the society and resulted in a number of agitations across the country.

The plea contended that the shocking news of premature release of all the convicts, including the writ petitioner was revealed to the present petitioner and public at large when the convicts were honoured and photographed in full public glare.

Bilkis had also filed a review petition against the May 13, 2022 order by the Supreme Court, which allowed the Gujarat government to consider remission plea by one of the convicts in terms of 1992 policy. The state government in August, decided to release all the 11 convicts, undergoing life term, on remission. A clutch of petitions has been filed challenging the state government's decision.

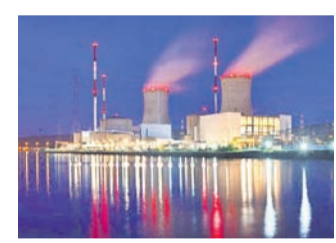
'20 new Nuclear power plants to be commissioned by 2031'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: India plans to commission 20 nuclear power plants by 2031, adding nearly 15,000 MW in power generating capacity, the government told the Lok Sabha Wednesday.

The first of these 20 nuclear power plants, a 700 MW unit, is expected to be commissioned in 2023 at Kakrapar in Gujarat, which already has three atomic power generating units operational.

According to a written reply by Minister of State in the PMO Jitendra Singh, the 500 MW Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor



at Kalpakkam is likely to be operational in 2024, followed by two 1,000 MW units at Kudankulam in 2025.

Two 700 MW units at Rawatbata in Rajasthan are likely to be completed by 2026, while another two 1,000 MW units are likely to be completed at

Kudankulam by 2027, he said. Two 700 MW units are expected to be completed at Gorakhpur in Haryana by 2029, the minister said listing out details of projects under consideration.

In addition, government had accorded administrative approvals and financial sanctions for building 10 atomic power units of 700 MW each at Gorakhpur, Haryana (units 3&4), Kaiga, Karnataka (units 5&6), Chutka, Madhya Pradesh (units 1&2) and four units at Mahi Banswara in Rajasthan. These 10 nuclear power units are likely to be completed progressively by 2031, Singh said.

Bengal: Stampede in blanket distribution programme, 3 dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Asansol (WB), Dec 14: Three persons were killed and five others seriously injured Wednesday in a stampede at a blanket distribution programme in West Bengal's Paschim Bardhaman district, police said.

The stampede occurred when people rushed towards the dais in an attempt to get blankets after the Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP left the venue. The ruling TMC alleged that the incident occurred due to "chaos created by" Adhikari who described the deaths and injuries as "unfortunate".

Asansol Mayor Bidhan Upadhyay, a TMC leader, claimed that around 5,000 people were present at the programme.

"Three persons were killed and five others were injured in the stampede. The injured people were hospitalised," a senior official of Asansol Durgapur Police Commissionerate said.

Of the three deceased, two were women and the other was a girl. Police claimed that no permission was taken from them for the event organised by a religious group. The police officer said that a probe into the incident was initiated.



Military Band members perform during Vijay Diwas celebrations at Victoria Memorial in Kolkata

Over 22% posts vacant in CBI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 14: The country's apex investigating agency the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has over 22 per cent vacancies in its workforce.

"As November 30, 2022, the sanctioned strength of personnel in the CBI is 7,295 and the number of vacancies is 1,673 which includes 128 additional posts sanctioned in different categories issued vide

order dated 29.06.2022," said a written reply by the Ministry of Personnel Wednesday.

"The occurrence of vacancies and their filling up is an ongoing process. The number keeps on varying depending on the induction, promotion, retirement and repatriation of the officers. Vacancies are filled up as per the provisions of the Recruitment Rules/Act in force," it said. The reply added that

proactive efforts were made to ensure filling up of vacancies at all ranks expeditiously. It said that proposals for induction of Officers at senior level in the CBI were placed before the Committee, constituted under Section 4(C)(1) of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946.

It also mentioned about the action to fill up vacancies in various ranks under the deputation quota taken as per the provision in Recruitment Rules (RRs) pertaining to the ranks.

Number of cyberattacks steadily rising in India

THE CORRESPONDING NUMBER OF CYBERATTACKS INCIDENTS IN 2018 WAS 2,08,456 WHICH INCREASED TO 3,94,499 IN 2019, TO 11,58,208 IN 2020 AND 14,02,809 IN 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 14: The number of cyber attacks in India has recorded a steady growth over the past few years, and the total number as reported to and tracked by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in the current year stands at 12,67,564 (till November), the Parliament was told Wednesday.

The corresponding number of such incidents in 2018 was 2,08,456 which increased to 3,94,499 in 2019, to 11,58,208 in 2020 and 14,02,809 in 2021, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev

Chandrasekhar told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

He said that with the borderless cyberspace coupled with anonymity, along with rapid growth of Internet, rise in cyber attacks and cyber security incidents is a global phenomenon and the government is fully cognisant and aware of various cyber security threats. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is mandated to track and monitor cyber security incidents in India. In the recently notified cyber security direction, CERT-In has now made it mandatory for all incidents to be mandatorily reported to it.



The minister said that CERT-In operates an automated cyber threat exchange platform for proactively collecting, analysing and sharing tailored alerts with organisations across sectors for proactive threat mitigation actions by them.

According to the analysis by CERT-In, the Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of the computers from where the attacks appear to have originated from a number of countries. The reply further said that government has published

'AIIMS server attack originated from China'

The cyberattack on servers of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences was carried out from China, a top source said Wednesday. However, all the data has been successfully retrieved. According to the Health Ministry source, the hackers targeted five physical servers of the hospital, but the data from these five servers have been retrieved now. Meanwhile, the hospital has also started functioning on online mode partially in some departments. The OPD appointment has been started through the online mode to some extent, a hospital source said on Wednesday. The source said that some online and offline new and follow-up registrations have started being made at the new Rajkumari Amrita Kaur (RAK) OPD.

National Cyber Security Policy 2013 with the vision of building a secure and resilient cyberspace for citizens, businesses, and government, and the mission of protecting information and information infrastructure in cyberspace, building capabilities to prevent and respond to cyber threats, reducing vulnerabilities and minimising damage from cyber incidents, through a combination of institutional structures, people,

processes, technology and cooperation.

Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued National Information Security Policy and Guidelines to the Central Ministries as well as state governments and Union Territories with the aim of preventing information security breaches and cyber intrusions in the information and communication technology infrastructure.

Maha panel to 'keep eye' on inter-faith marriages

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 14: The state government has set up a 10-member panel to keep an eye on 'inter-caste marriages', ostensibly to prevent Shradha Walkar-type incidents in future, even as the Opposition cried foul, here Wednesday.

Women & Child Welfare Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha said that the panel was formed after much deliberation to avoid tragedies involving children of inter-caste marriages, particularly if the girls go against their family wishes or are estranged.

The ruling Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party have welcomed the move while the Opposition Nationalist Congress Party slammed the decision terming it as rubbish, retrograde, nauseating step to spy on who marries whom.

The panel, Intercaste/Interfaith Marriage-Family Coordination Committee (state-level) will collect full information on couples entering into such wedlocks, the families of the girl if they are estranged, or who may have eloped and provide assistance as needed, as per a Government Resolution issued Tuesday.

The panel will serve as a forum for such women and their families where they can get counselling and communicate to resolve issues, and it will study various other policies and laws pertaining to the issue and recommend improvements or solutions.

The move comes barely days after Deputy Chief Minister



Devendra Fadnis indicated that the state would consider enacting a law on 'love-jihad' after studying similar legislation in other states.

Lodha clarified that the panel was not against such (inter-caste/interfaith) marriages, but specifically intended to help those women who have been cut-off from their families and attempt to bring them together.

Last month, Lodha had asked the State Women's Commissioner to form a special squad and identify women, who have married outside their caste or religion, without support of their families and are estranged, to enable extend necessary support and security as required.

The panel will collect all information on registered/unregistered intercaste/interfaith marriages, those that were solemnised only in religious places, weddings after the couple eloped, check on the wellbeing of the newly-married

women and help contact their families if they have severed relations, and arrange counsellors for such parents not ready to resume relations. The BSS Spokesperson Krishna Hegde and BJP's Ram Kadam welcomed the initiative terming it as a step in the 'right direction'.

NCP former Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad pounced on the government with a strong reaction against the decision.

"What's this rubbish of a committee to check inter-caste/inter-religion marriages? Who is the government to spy on who marries whom in a liberal Maharashtra? This is retrograde, nauseating step. Which way is the progressive state heading to... Stay away from peoples' private lives," said Dr Awhad.

Lodha said that this panel will be a move for reconciliation and whoever wants assistance shall be given all support and urged for support to the decision, in the wake of the Shradha Walkar incident that shocked the nation in November.

Nagpur set to host Winter session of Maha legislature

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 14: For the first time after two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, Nagpur will host the Maharashtra Legislature's winter session from December 19-30.

The decision was taken by the Business Advisory Committees of the Assembly and Council which would meet again later this month to decide on further extending the session.

The BAC meeting was held with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ajit Pawar, Speaker Rahul Narvekar, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council Dr Neelam Gorhe, Leader of Opposition in Council Ambadas Danve, and others in attendance.



Gorhe announced that both houses will also take up a resolution expressing solidarity with the people living in the border villages of Maharashtra-Karnataka and Shinde will move it in the Assembly and the Council.

The Opposition parties had argued that since the winter session of the legislature could not be conducted in Nagpur due to pandemic lockdowns, this year it should be held for an extended sitting of three weeks to take up local issues of the Marathwada-Vidarbha regions.

'PLA was planning to set up post near Arunachal's Holy waterfalls'

LOCALS AT TSECHU, A SMALL TOWN CLOSEST TO THE POINT WHERE INDIAN AND CHINESE TROOPS CLASHED FRIDAY, ARE EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH THE PLA FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE OF THE REGION SACRED TO THEM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 14: Like in Galwan, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was planning to set up an Observation Post (OP) on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Yangste in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, when the Indian Army personnel intervened. This was revealed by a senior army officer posted in Arunachal Pradesh. As per laid down guidelines, no OP or similar structure can be set up close to the LAC by either side.

"It is already extremely cold there. Within the next couple of weeks, all areas close to the LAC will be under several feet of snow. On the Indian side, final preparations are being made to stock our forward positions with adequate supplies. There is a lot of troop movement as well. The PLA is certainly interested to learn more about our preparations for the winter; hence the decision to set up the OP," the army officer said.



While the PLA does have surveillance cameras, they are at a distance from the LAC. Drones are also used but a direct view is always considered the best to plan any move. In Galwan, the clash with the PLA started after the Indian Army demolished an OP that the Chinese refused to dismantle.

Locals at Tsechu, a small town closest to the point where Indian and Chinese troops clashed Friday are extremely unhappy with the PLA for disturbing the peace of the region.

"This happened barely a few hundred metres from Chumi Gyatse, a waterfall (a collection of 108 smaller waterfalls) that is considered holy by us Monpas from both sides of the LAC. The Indian Army respects our sentiments and never does anything to disturb the sanctity of the place. This is the second time that the

PLA has created a ruckus here," one of them said.

The PLA has cause for concern. Over the last few years, the Indian Army, with help from the Arunachal Pradesh government, has created a lot of infrastructure in that region.

While this has helped locals, it has also aided in quicker and easier movement of soldiers and equipment to the border.

"In Galwan, our brave soldiers were taken by surprise. But we were prepared this time. As soon as we detected movement by the PLA towards the LAC, we knew how to react. They were trying to access higher ground to set up the OP but we stopped them and forced them to return. The Chinese kept on saying that the whole region is their territory but we were not interested. The injuries suffered by a few of our soldiers are minor ones," the army officer added.

Monitoring of NE projects through satellites, drones

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shillong, Dec 14: In a bid for the proper and timely implementation of projects and schemes, the Central government has been monitoring their progress and accuracy through satellite, drone and mobile apps, officials said here Wednesday.

An official of the Meghalaya-based North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) said that till November, out of 588 identified projects, 562 at 1,664 different locations across the eight states, have been geo-tagged through satellite images and mobile app.

The Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER) in collaboration with NESAC has developed a project monitoring mobile application.

The official said that till December 7, 145 projects costing around ₹3,393 crore have been sanctioned in various sectors under the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS).

The North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBCDC) has sanctioned 14 projects worth ₹90.86 crore in the Bamboo Sector during 2015-16 to 2021-22.

The NECBCDC projects include,



setting up of Cane and Bamboo Technology Park at Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh; promotion of bamboo handicrafts, jewellery and utility products in Poma village, Papum Pare District, Arunachal Pradesh; setting up of bamboo crushing units in NER for production of bamboo powder in Assam; establishment of integrated agarbatti cluster with Zero Wastages Concept in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram; and bamboo resource creation through plantation in Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya.

The NESAC was established in 2000 as a joint initiative of the Department of Space and the Shillong based North Eastern Council (NEC).

Assam's 'Gamocha' gets GI tag; state in jubilation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 14: 'Gamocha', a symbol of the culture and identity of Assam, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the central government, five years after the first application was made.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Twitter shared the GI registration certificate, issued Tuesday, bringing cheers to people across the northeastern state.

A GI is tagged to primarily agricultural, natural or manufactured products, handicrafts and industrial goods originating from a definite geographical territory.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "A day of pride for Assam, as our #Gamosa gets a Geographical Indication Tag by the Government of India." "Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is often seen with a 'Gamocha' draped around his neck," Sarma congratulated all the people of Assam for this recognition. Union Shipping, Ports and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal



stated that Assam's pride is shining bright.

"Due recognition of our heritage & cultural identity. 'Gamosa' gets the GI tag, bringing joy to thousands of weavers of this special item that has become a global symbol of Assam," he added.

The GI tag has been registered in favour of the Directorate of Handloom & Textiles of the Assam government under the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The certificate has been awarded for 'Gamocha' as of October 16, 2017 as per the application by the directorate. The 'gamocha', a handwoven rectangular cotton piece of cloth with red borders and different designs

and motifs, is traditionally offered to elders and guests as a mark of respect and honour by Assamese people. It is an integral part of all socio-religious ceremonies in the state and is considered as an Assamese identity and pride.

A 'gamocha' literally means a towel and is commonly used in Assamese households for day-to-day affairs. For specific purposes, it is also made of expensive materials like traditional Assamese 'Pat' silk and in different colours as well.

A 'gamocha' meant for exchange during 'Bihu' festival is known as 'Bihuwan'. This unique scarf, which is found only in Assam, is also used as a signifier of reverence while decorating altars or covering religious books.

'Angkor Wat of Northeast' awaits world heritage tag



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Dec 14: Unakoti, the chiselled 'Angkor Wat of the Northeast' region, is vying for a UNESCO world heritage tag with both the government and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), working to preserve the series of Shaivite rock sculptures in the northern part of the state. Nestled in the Raghunandan hills, about 180 km from here, Unakoti is home to giant bas-relief sculp-

tures of the 8-9th century carved out of a huge hill.

"The structures of the rock-cut sculptures are gigantic and have distinct mongoloid features and display almost the same mystical charm as the spellbinding figures in the Angkor Wat temple of Cambodia. So we call it the Angkor Wat of Northeast," said Panna Lal Roy, a well-known historical writer of the state, who has been studying the sculptures for many years.

Unakoti means one less than a crore (koti in Bengali) and is a rock-cut art that has suffered centuries of neglect and due to vagaries of weather, many of the art facets now stand degraded, he said.

After the ASI adopted it as a heritage site, the situation has "slightly improved, though a lot of work, including substantial excavation remains to be undertaken", a government official said, adding that the Centre has approached UNESCO to declare it

as a World Heritage Site.

The Centre has recently granted ₹12 crore to the state for developing the place as a major tourist destination, but as the ASI does not allow any activity in the core area of the archaeological site, the official claimed.

The Tripura government is developing areas near the site to encourage tourists to visit this treasure of the Northeast, he said.

There are two types of images found at Unakoti - rock-carved figures and stone images. Among the rock-cut carvings, the central Shiva head and gigantic Ganesha figures are prominent.

The central Shiva head, known as Unakotiswara Kal Bhairava, is about 30 feet high, including an embroidered head-dress which itself is 10 feet high. On each side of the head-dress of the central Shiva, there are two full-size female fig-

ures - one of Durga standing on a lion and another female figure on the other side. In addition, three enormous images of Nandi Bull are found half-buried in the ground. There are various other stone and rock-cut images at Unakoti.

Hindu mythology has it that Lord Shiva once spent a night here on way to Kashi.

Unakoti or one less than a crore gods and goddesses followed him. Legend has it that Lord Shiva had asked his followers to wake up before sunrise and make their way towards Kashi. Unfortunately, none woke up in the morning, except Lord Shiva himself. Before he set out for Kashi alone, he cursed the sleeping gods and goddesses to turn into stone and that is how the site got its name, Roy said. Thousands of people and tourists throng the site during Ashokastami Mela, held in the month of April.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 14: After notching a record post-pandemic air passengers movement, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) is witnessing a massive overcrowding of fliers with the swank terminal resembling a chaotic Mumbai railway station during peak hours.

Social activist Binu Varghese and other passengers posted alarming videos of the sea of humanity at the airport, with many irate fliers breaching security norms to rush past barricades or security and baggage check-ins, even as the harried CISF and Mumbai Police personnel tried to grapple the situation.

Videos showed huge crowds at CSMIA-T2 with passengers wearily awaiting their turns to complete the check-in procedures as the crowds continued to increase outside and inside. "Massive crowds of passengers were seen moving around in CSMIA T2, Tuesday at 5 am, shot by me. Do plan your schedule," advised Varghese, while businessman Ritesh Dodhia of 'Dodhia Group' suggested, "heavy rush at domestic airport security check-ins, whoever planning to travel please take care of extra time".

The social media went viral with the videos of the disarray at CSMIA, venting their ire on the airport authorities and even tagged Ratan Tata and AAL, among others.

Another Twitterer uploaded a photo and wrote how Mumbai

roads and stations had this scene, and said the chaos is such that even gates are not allotted to airlines, with no kiosks and pad.

The besieged CSMIA has said that it is working on the issue but due to the sudden passenger surge, they are being prioritised as per departure timings.

An official spokesperson listed out several initiatives like augmenting manpower resources with the inclusion of Passenger Service Executive along with infrastructural facilities inside and outside the airport, a digital passenger flow and queue monitoring system in the Security Processing Zone, teams and extra staff at pre-security checks, duty managers present at the security counters to manage queues and prioritize senior citizens or passengers with child in arms, similar initiatives to manage queues at self-baggage drop kiosks, etc.

The developments came just a day after the CSMIA announced Monday that it had created a record of 1.50 lakh domestic and international fliers passing through the airport in the post-pandemic times December 10, which was 97 per cent of the pre-pandemic peak.

Tuesday's photos and videos at CSMIA were similar to the scenes witnessed at Delhi airport last week and after many complaints, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia paid a surprise visit to the airport.



national

of the day quote

The Rajya Sabha that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has registered a total of 497 cases till December 2 this year, including the Coimbatore blast

NITYANAND RAI | MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

Guided by our progressive vision, we promise to empower the women, uplift the youth, and uphold the vibrant culture. We promise to bring a credible change for the people of Meghalaya

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Revenue during FY 2020-21 has reduced drastically as compared to FY 2019-20 due to travel restrictions imposed during Covid-19 by the Government of India. However, after lifting of restrictions and starting of cooked food in trains during FY 2021-22, the revenue again gradually increased

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | MINISTER OF RAILWAYS

SHORT TAKES

ED arrests Mukhtar Ansari

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Wednesday arrested jailed gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari in a money laundering case after he was produced before a court in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, officials said. Ansari, a five-time former MLA, has been lodged in a jail at Banda in Uttar Pradesh for the last few years in connection with criminal cases being probed by the state police. The 59-year-old was questioned by the ED in this case last year.

IED defused at J&K's Baramulla

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with other security forces, Wednesday destroyed an improvised explosive device (IED) found in Pattan area of Baramulla district, thereby thwarting an untoward incident, officials said.

Drugs worth ₹39cr seized in Assam

Guwahati: Drugs worth ₹39 crore were seized from an ambulance here and another vehicle in Karimganj district in the early hours of Wednesday and three persons were arrested in connection with it, police said.

Lalan death: Protest outside CBI office

Kolkata: Demanding action against the CBI over the custodial death of Lalan Sheikh, one of the main accused in the Rampurhat massacre, his family demonstrated outside the agency's office in West Bengal's Birbhum district with the body Wednesday.

WINTER IS HERE; ICE SKATING BEGINS IN SHIMLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Dec 14: Ice skating, a major winter attraction of Himachal Pradesh's state capital began Wednesday at Asia's biggest natural rink located here, an official said.

Skating enthusiasts converged at the rink braving the morning chill to enjoy the thrill of sliding on layers of ice.

"Skating makes me happy and I am enjoying it," said nine-year-old Aayan, a student of class V in St Thomas School, among 16 kids taking to the rink in the first session.

"I was eagerly waiting for ice skating to start and enjoyed the first session," said 21-year-old Joant Tatung, skating for the past 16 years. "It is a tough task to get up early in the morning but when

BORDER ISSUE

No state will stake claim till SC verdict: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Stepping in to defuse the border tensions between Maharashtra and Karnataka, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday asked Chief Ministers of the two states to set up a six-member joint ministerial panel to address related issues and not make any claims till the Supreme Court pronounces its verdict on the dispute.

Shah also told Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his Karnataka counterpart Basavaraj Bommai that the border issue between the two states cannot be settled on the streets but only through constitutional means.

Shah had summoned the chief ministers of the two states after border tensions flared up last week leading to violence in Belgavi and adjoining regions of Karnataka which have a sizeable Marathi-speaking population.

"I had called Chief Minister of Karnataka, and chief minister and deputy chief minister of Maharashtra to resolve border disputes between the two states through constitutional means," Shah told reporters here. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra were also present at the meeting.

Shah said the two chief ministers had agreed not to make any claims and counterclaims on the border issue till the Supreme Court decides on the matter.

"A team will be formed comprising three ministers from both sides to hold a detailed discussion on this issue and ensure that decisions which are taken are percolated at the ground level," Shah said briefing reporters on the decisions taken at the meeting.

Four Meghalaya MLAs switch to BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Four Meghalaya MLAs, including two from the state's ruling National People's Party, joined the BJP Wednesday as the party looks to expand its footprints in the north-eastern region ahead of assembly polls in the state.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is the party's pointsman for the region, said the joining of the four "experienced and



RESPECTED political figures will mark a "new beginning" for the BJP in the state, where it could win only two seats in the 60 member-assembly in the 2018 polls.

Though the state's ruling NPP has been a member of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, their relations have been far from smooth. The BJP's decision to induct two of its MLAs, Benedic Marak and Ferlin Sangma, into its fold underscores its determined push to corner the NPP and emerge as a strong force in the state ahead of the polls likely to be held in February.

The two other MLAs who joined the party at its headquarters here are Samuel M Sangma, an independent, and Himalaya Muktan Shangpliing, who is from the Trinamool Congress. It is a big boost to the party, Sarma said. The Assam chief minister told reporters that under the Narendra Modi government, the north-east, which has eight states, has undergone tremendous change since 2014 and every sector has progressed.

Sambit Patra, who oversees the BJP's organisational affairs for the region, said the north-east will become a new engine of growth for the country under Modi. BJP national secretary Rituraj Sinha said Meghalaya is ready to join Modi's development agenda.

Oppn evolves joint strategy on Indo-China conflict issue

Several opposition parties are seeking answers from the government on the Chinese transgressions along the border and moved adjournment notices in both houses of Parliament, demanding an urgent discussion on the issue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Leaders of several opposition parties Wednesday met in Parliament House complex and decided to take on the government unitedly on the India-China border issue and are likely to issue a joint statement.

Leaders of 17 opposition parties -- the Congress, RJD, DMK, CPI, CPI-M, AAP, Samajwadi Party, JDU, NCP, Shiv Sena, Kerala Congress, National Conference, AIUDF, RLD, MDMK, VCK and KCM -- met in the chamber of Mallikarjun Kharge, the leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha, and decided to corner the government on the border issue.

The TMC was, however, not present at the meeting. It was decided to stage a walkout in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in case the government did not agree to their demand for an urgent discussion. Leaders of the opposition parties also staged a walkout in both houses.

They also decided to issue a joint statement on the Chinese transgressions issue, but sounded a word of caution that the opposition should not sound lowering the moral of the armed forces.

Besides this, the leaders discussed important issues to be raised and formulated their joint future strategy in both houses of Parliament.

TMC party sources said Sudeep Bandyopadhyay was supposed to go for the opposition meeting, but could not attend due to his indisposition. TMC leaders had con-

veyed to other opposition leaders that they will be on board on the decision taken at the opposition meeting. The TMC members later walked out along with other opposition members in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. Sources said a decision was taken that a joint statement on behalf of the opposition parties would be issued on their demands instead of separate remarks made by leaders of various opposition parties. The Opposition leaders would be meeting in Parliament again Thursday and will further plan on their strategy.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh had given a statement in both houses of Parliament Tuesday saying Chinese troops tried to "unilaterally" change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Yangtze area of Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector last week but the Indian Army compelled them to retreat by its "firm and resolute" response.

In similar statements in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Singh said there were "no fatalities" or serious injuries to the Indian soldiers and that the clash led to injuries to a few personnel on both sides.

Parliament Wednesday passed a Bill to rename the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre as the India International Arbitration Centre.

The Rajya Sabha passed the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which was piloted by Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju in the house Wednesday.

The Lok Sabha has already passed the Bill August 2022, which expands this to include the con-

Why don't we stop our trade with China? Most of the goods imported from China are made in India. China will get a lesson from this and employment will be created in India

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

KCR INAUGURATES BRS PARTY OFFICE

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababtu Naidu Wednesday inaugurated his party Bharat Rashtra Samithi's office in New Delhi, making a foray into national politics. Rao hoisted the party's flag and formally occupied the seat in the party president's office at Sardar Patel marg, a prime location in the national capital



CISF personnel keep vigil as security has been enhanced at the Taj Mahal in the view of Christmas Day and New Year in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Teen attacked with acid in west Delhi



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Two masked men on a bike flung acid on a 17-year-old girl minutes after she left her west Delhi home for school Wednesday, leaving her with serious injuries, and as outrage spread over the attack many also raised questions over the availability of acid in markets despite a ban.

Three people -- prime accused Sachin Arora and his two friends Harshit Aggarwal (19) and Virender Singh (22) -- have been arrested, police said. Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, Sagar Preet Hooda told a press conference that the acid used in the attack was procured through an e-commerce portal and payment was made by Arora through an e-wallet. In a statement, police said on the basis of technical evidence, it was found that the acid was procured on Flipkart. There was no immediate response from the e-commerce portal.

During interrogation, it was learnt that Arora and the victim were friends till September. They fell

It's as easy to get acid as vegetables: Maliwal

New Delhi: Acid is as easy to get as vegetables despite a ban on its retail sale, Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal said Wednesday after a 17-year-old girl was attacked with acid here while she was going to school. Activists raised questions over the rampant sale of acid in markets and claimed that the ban exists only on paper. The Supreme Court had in 2013 banned over-the-counter sale of acid at retail outlets following an increase in the number of acid attacks and ordered a compensation of ₹3 lakh to be paid by state governments to each acid attack victim. In a video uploaded on Twitter, Maliwal said the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) may approach court for stricter enforcement of the ban on over-the-counter sale of acid.

out and this led to the accused to attack her, Hooda said, adding that he lived in the girl's neighbourhood. The incident was caught on a CCTV camera and the class 12 student could be seen shaking vigorously after the attack that left her with burns to her face, police said, adding that the teen was with her younger sister when the attack took place at Mohan Garden near Uttam Nagar.

Parl passes Bill to rename arbitration centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Parliament Wednesday passed a Bill to rename the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre as the India International Arbitration Centre.

The Rajya Sabha passed the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which was piloted by Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju in the house Wednesday.

The Lok Sabha has already passed the Bill August 2022, which expands this to include the con-

duct of other forms of alternative dispute resolution besides arbitration.

While replying to the debate, Rijiju in the Upper House said this Bill will help India emerge as an attractive destination for arbitration at the global level.

"India is still not a hub for arbitration, while small countries and cities have emerged as major centres for arbitration," the minister said. He assured the members saying that with the steps being taken by the Modi government, India would emerge as an ar-



bitration centre in the coming years. "This amendment has been brought with that approach," he said, adding presently people prefer places such as Singapore, London and Hong Kong for arbitration but after this initiative, there would be changes. The country is emerg-

ing as an economic power and along with that India will also attract the global business community for arbitration, Rijiju said.

"We can provide arbitration awards at more affordable charges in comparative to those centres," he said, adding that the government wants to start work in this direction as soon as possible. He also rejected the allegations that the government has brought this Bill and procedure under the pressure of the World Bank and said, "It is the government's considered opinion and decision to bring this Bill."

Six dead, 21 hurt as bus falls into ditch in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Firozabad (UP), Dec 14: Six people, including a one-year-old boy, died and 21 were injured when a bus fell into a roadside ditch on the Lucknow-Agra expressway in the Nagla Khangar area here Wednesday morning, police said.

"A passenger bus heading to Raebareli from Ludhiana met with an accident Wednesday morning. A team of local police was rushed to the spot to undertake rescue work," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Ranvijay Singh said. "Six passengers of the bus, including a woman and a child, were killed in the accident. Around 21 others sustained injuries and were taken to a nearby hospital for medical treatment," he added.

Four of the deceased were identified as Reena (22), her one-year-old son Ayansh, and Rajesh (25) of Fatehpur district and Sant Lal (70) of Kaushambi district, the police said. The bodies have been sent for a post-mortem examination and the identities of the other two deceased are being ascertained, he added.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

80 per cent of the rink which is equal to the size of five tennis courts as construction material for building the lift from Lakkar Bazar to Mall Road under Shimla Smart City Mission is lying at

the entry of the rink, he told PTI. A skating carnival with events like ice dance, fancy dress, tug of war and an ice hockey match would be organized on December 25-26 and the Gymkhana (races and

skating seasons beginning late, Prabhakar said.

December 2016 was warmest in the history of Shimla and maximum temperature soared to 22 degrees Celsius, spelling doom for ice skating and only six sessions were held.

Earlier, the lowest number of sessions, just 12, was in 1972 while the maximum 118 sessions were held in 1997-98, he said.

The history of the Shimla Ice Skating Club dates back to 1920, when tennis courts were converted into a natural ice skating rink by an Irish military official, Blessington.

In the winter months, when he sprinkled water on the tennis court to settle the grass, it froze within seconds and he immediately thought of converting the arena into an ice skating rink.

international

of the day quote

Yeah, we've seen these (India-China border clash) reports. We call for de-escalation and to ensure that the tensions along in that area do not grow

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

It is in our German and our European interest for the rest of the Balkans to become part of the European Union

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

I strongly believe that the creativity and ingenuity of Africa's young leaders will help shape the future. And that their ideas, your ideas, innovation and initiatives will benefit the entire world

KAMALA HARRIS | VICE PRESIDENT, US

SHORT TAKES

SA Prez escapes impeachment

Johannesburg: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has escaped impeachment after a controversial vote in Parliament in Cape Town late Tuesday afternoon, but his ruling African National Congress (ANC) faces new challenges. The Parliament session had been convened after two delays for members to debate a report which found that Ramaphosa might have breached his constitutional obligations, in what has become known as the Phala Phala debacle -- named after the farm where he breeds exotic cattle and other animals.

20 men lashed in public in Afghan

Islamabad: Twenty people were lashed in public Wednesday in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as punishment for alleged adultery, theft, and other crimes, a provincial official said. Afghanistan's new authorities have set hardline policies since they took over the country in August 2021 that reflect their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia. Officials said each man was lashed between 35 to 39 times, and the punishments were carried out before provincial Taliban officials, religious clerics, elders and local people.

5 year-old Indian kid falls to death

Dubai: A five-year-old child of Indian descent died after falling from a high-rise building in Al Qusais, east of Dubai, police said. The girl fell through a tiny window that opened from the ninth floor of the family's apartment near Al Bustan centre December 10, the Khaleej Times reported. The five-year-old's death is a third such mishap to occur this year in UAE.

Cambridge Dictionary alters definition of 'man', 'woman'

THE DECISION TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF 'MAN' AND 'WOMAN' HAS DRAWN A FIERY REACTION AND EVOKED MIXED FEELINGS AMONG SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 14: Conservatives around the world strongly criticised the Cambridge Dictionary on social media platforms for changing the definitions of the words 'man' and 'woman' to be inclusive of people who identify as another gender other than their biological sex.

The new definition of 'man' now includes "an adult who lives and identifies as a male though they may have been said to have a different

sex at birth." And the updated definition of 'woman' reads "an adult who lives and identifies as female though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth."

However, the longstanding definitions are still there which said that sex and gender identity always adhered to one another.

Along with the definition, the dictionary also gave two examples to explain the meaning of "man": "It also gives two examples: "Mark is a trans man (= a man who was

said to be female when they were born)" and "their doctor encouraged them to live as a man for a while before undergoing surgical transition".

For "woman" the examples read: "She was the first trans woman elected to a national office" and "Mary is a woman who was assigned male at birth".

A spokesperson for the Cambridge Dictionary told the Telegraph, "Our editors made this addition to the entry for woman in October. They carefully studied usage patterns of the word woman and concluded that this definition is one that learners of English should be aware of to support their understanding of how the language is used. The first definition

WOMAN:
An adult who lives and identifies as female though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth

MAN:
An adult who lives and identifies as a male though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth

at the entry for woman remains unchanged and continues to be an adult female human being".

The revised definitions were made in October and are now being criticised on social media. A user commented, "The Cambridge

Dictionary just changed the definition of "woman". Remember, if you can control the language, you can control the population."

Another user wrote, "F-ing traitors to the truth. Cambridge Dictionary is only the latest. If we

don't stop them from erasing women our civilization is ngmi (not going to make it)."

Still, some social media users pushed back on the backlash, labelling critics transphobic and celebrating the changes as more inclusive. "Guess what transphobes are upset about now? You guessed the dictionary, didn't you." Evan Urquhart of Assigned Media tweeted.

"(Trans-exclusionary radical feminists) gonna blow a gasket," sculptor Daniel Lismore shared. "Trans people deserve to be recognised for who they are."

Similarly, the UK-based group Bristol Leading Against Transphobia hailed the decision as "fantastic news".



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948)

GANDHI'S BUST AT UN HQ

Mahatma Gandhi finally arrived at the United Nations headquarters, as India gifted a bust of the Indian leader to the world body, the first sculpture of the Mahatma to be installed here. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres inaugurated the bust of Gandhi

It's nice to celebrate Christmas and have parties, but let's lower the level of Christmas spending a bit. Let's make a more humble Christmas and let's send what we save to the people of Ukraine who need it

POPE FRANCIS | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER



Impossible to track cases: China

CHINA IS FACING A SURGE IN CASES THAT EXPERTS FEAR IT IS ILL-EQUIPPED TO MANAGE, WITH MILLIONS OF VULNERABLE ELDERLY STILL NOT FULLY VACCINATED AND UNDERFUNDED HOSPITALS LACKING THE RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH AN EXPECTED INFUX OF INFECTED PATIENTS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, Dec 14: China's top health body said Wednesday the true scale of coronavirus infections in the country is now "impossible" to track, with officials warning cases are rising rapidly in Beijing after the government abruptly abandoned its zero-Covid policy last week.

After nearly three years of attempting to stamp out the virus, the sudden end of mass testing and quarantines has led to a corresponding drop in officially reported infections, which hit an all-time high only last month.

With testing no longer required for much of the country, China's National Health Commission Wednesday admitted its numbers no longer reflected reality.

"Many asymptomatic people are no longer participating in nucleic acid testing, so it is impossible to accurately grasp the actual number of asymptomatic infected people," the NHC said in a statement.

The statement comes after Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said the capital's new infections were "rapidly growing", according to state media.

Meanwhile, China's NHC will roll out the second Covid-19 vaccine



It's always very difficult for any country coming out of a situation where you've had very, very tight controls

MARGARET HARRIS | SPOKESPERSON, WHO

booster shots for high-risk groups and elderly people over 60 years old, it said in a statement Wednesday. The time gap between the first and second booster shots will be six months, NHC said, adding people who can take the second booster shot will include those with severe existing diseases and those with low immunity.

Medicine Shortage
Restaurants, shops and parks are now allowed to reopen, but residents are finding the path to living with the virus less than straightforward. Many with symptoms

have opted to self-medicate at home, while others are staying in to protect themselves from getting infected.

And businesses are struggling as Covid-19 rips through the population and affects their staffing. As a result, Beijing's streets are largely empty.

Soaring demand for rapid antigen tests and medications has created a black market with astronomical prices, while buyers resort to sourcing the goods from "dealers" whose contacts are being passed around WeChat groups. Authorities are cracking down,

with market regulators hitting one business in Beijing with a 300,000 yuan (\$43,000) fine for selling overpriced test kits, the local Beijing News reported Tuesday.

And in a sea change for a country where infection with the virus was once taboo and recovered patients faced discrimination, people are taking to social media to show off their test results and give detailed descriptions of their experience while sick.

Doctors in Danger
A growing number of China's doctors and nurses are catching Covid-19 and some have been asked to keep working, as people showing mostly moderate symptoms through hospitals and clinics, according to medical staff and dozens of posts on social media.

Health experts say China's sudden loosening of strict Covid rules is likely to trigger a surge in severe cases in coming months, and hospitals in big cities are already showing signs of strain.

Health officials have been recommending that people with mild Covid symptoms quarantine at home and have also said most of the cases reported in the country are mild or asymptomatic.

WAR RETURNS TO KYIV

Ukraine shoots down Iranian-made drones launched by Russia

Since a series of key battlefield setbacks this summer and autumn, Russia has been pummeling critical infrastructure across Ukraine with missiles and drones, plunging millions into cold and darkness in winter

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kyiv, Dec 14: Ukrainian forces said today they had shot down an entire swarm of Iranian-made drones launched at the capital by Russian troops in their latest attack on Kyiv.

Explosions rang out over a central neighbourhood in the early hours of Wednesday, the mayor said, and AFP journalists saw law enforcement and emergency service workers inspecting metal fragments at a snow-covered impact site.

"The terrorists started this morning with 13 Shaheds," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, referring to the Iran-made weapons. "According to the preliminary information, all 13 were shot down by our Ukrainian air defence systems."

He added that residents of the capital, which has now been subjected to nearly ten months of air raid sirens and frequent aerial attacks



since Russia invaded the country in February, should stay alert to government warnings of incoming attacks.

Kyiv region officials praised the Ukrainian air defence and electronic warfare units for downing the latest wave of suicide drones.

US ambassador in Ukraine Bridget Brink said following the morning attacks that Kyiv could continue to rely on Washington's backing. "More support is on the way," she wrote on Twitter.

Moscow last week also targeted Ukrainian energy infrastructure, piling pressure on the country's power grid, whose operators have for weeks been forced to implement rolling blackouts.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said this week that between 40 and 50 percent of the country's grid was out of action because of Russia's strikes.

Peru declares state of emergency

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lima, Dec 14: Peru's new government declared 30-day national emergency Wednesday amid violent protests following the ouster of President Pedro Castillo, suspending the rights of people to gather and move freely across the Andean nation.



"The National Police with the support of the Armed Forces will ensure the control throughout the national territory of personal property and, above all, strategic infrastructure and the safety and well-being of all Peruvians," Defense Minister Luis Otarola Peñaranda announced.

Otarola said the declaration "means the suspension of the rights of assembly... Freedom of move-

ment." He said the government has not determined whether a curfew will be imposed. Peru's new president, Dina Boluarte, pleaded for calm as demonstrations continue against her and the Congress that ousted her predecessor. Answering demands for immediate elections, she suggested they could be held a year from now, four months before her earlier proposal, which placated no one.

"Peru cannot overflow with blood," Boluarte said as she floated the possibility of scheduling general elections for December 2023 to reporters, just before a hearing to determine whether Castillo will remain jailed for 18 months while authorities build a rebellion case against him. The judge then postponed the hearing because Castillo refused to participate.

"The only thing I can tell you sisters and brothers (is) to keep calm," Boluarte said. "We have already lived through this experience in the 80s and 90s, and I believe that we do not want to return to that painful history."



FACE OFF: Police officers stand guard as supporters of Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro gesture during a protest after Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered a temporary arrest warrant of indigenous leader Jose Acacio Serere Xavante for alleged anti-democratic acts, in Brasilia, Brazil

Ganges project among 10 initiatives restoring natural world: UN

Restoring the health of the Ganges is the focus of a major push to cut pollution, rebuild forest cover and bring a wide range of benefits to the 520 million people living around its vast basin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Montreal, Dec 14: An ambitious project that aims to improve the health of the Ganges, India's holy river, is among 10 "ground-breaking" efforts recognised from around the globe by the United Nations for their role in restoring the natural world.

According to a report unveiled during the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) here Tuesday, climate change, population

growth, industrialisation and irrigation have degraded the Ganges along its arcing 2,525-kilometre course from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

The initiatives were declared World Restoration Flagships and are eligible to receive UN-backed promotion, advice or funding.

They were selected under the banner of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global movement coordinated by the UN Environment Programme



(UNEP) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

It is designed to prevent and reverse the degradation of natural spaces across the planet, the UN said.

Together, the 10 flagships aim to restore more than 68 million

hectares — an area bigger than Myanmar, France or Somalia — and create nearly 15 million jobs, the UN said. On the Ganges River Rejuvenation project, the UN noted that it was launched in 2014.

The government-led 'Namami

Transforming our relationship with nature is the key to reversing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, pollution and waste

INGER ANDERSEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNEP

Gange' initiative is rejuvenating, protecting and conserving the Ganges and its tributaries, reforesting parts of the Ganges basin and promoting sustainable farming, according to the statement.

The other inaugural World Restoration Flagships include the Trinitational Atlantic Forest Pact, which aims to protect and restore the forest in Brazil, Paraguay and

Argentina, and the Abu Dhabi Marine Restoration project which is safeguarding the world's second-largest dugong population in Abu Dhabi.

The Great Green Wall for Restoration and Peace initiative to restore savannas, grasslands and farmlands across Africa, the Multi-Country Mountain Initiative based in Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Rwanda, and the Small Island Developing States Restoration Drive focused on three small island developing states — Vanuatu, St Lucia and Comoros were also recognised.

The Altyrn Dala Conservation Initiative in Kazakhstan to restore the steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems, the Central American Dry Corridor, and Shan-Shui Initiative in China were the other projects on the list.



Russia opposed the resolution and said before the vote that it wants an opinion from UN legal experts on whether the Economic and Social Council was legally able to oust Iran.

The resolution expresses "serious concern" over Iran's actions since September "to continuously undermine and increasingly suppress the human rights of women and girls, including the right to freedom of expression and opinion, often with the use of excessive force, by administering policies flagrantly contrary to the human rights of women and girls and to the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as through the use of lethal force resulting in the deaths of peaceful protesters, including women and girls."

of the day quote

We are very much concerned about how social media platforms become an environment that spreads hate and disinformation. And I think it's incumbent on social media companies to ensure that this does not happen

STEPHANE DUJARRIC | SPOKESPERSON, UN

Startups are prone to failures is a very high probability. Though I must say, the success rate of startups in India is relatively higher than the rest of the world

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

The government's focus on ease-of-doing-business and progressive policies, together with Mahindra's investment, will act as a catalyst for Maharashtra to become India's EV hub, attracting further Indian and Foreign Direct Investment

RAJESH JEURIKAR | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (AUTO & FARM SECTORS), M&M

SHORT TAKES

5G active in 50 cities

New Delhi: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore are among 50 towns across 14 states where 5G services have started, minister of state for telecommunications Devushin Chauhan informed Parliament Wednesday. According to the information shared by Chauhan in Lok Sabha, Gujarat has 5G services available across all districts. "Telecom service providers have started providing 5G services in the country from October 1, 2022 onwards and as of November 26, 2022, 5G services have started in 50 towns distributed over 14 states and Union Territories," Chauhan said.

UK inflation eases

London: UK inflation eased in November as gasoline and diesel prices rose more slowly than the previous month. The consumer price index rose 10.7% in the 12 months through November, down from a 41-year high of 11.1% in October, the Office for National Statistics said Wednesday. November's inflation rate was less than the 10.9% expected by economists. The news comes after the US Tuesday reported a second consecutive drop in its inflation rate. US consumer prices rose 7.1% in November, down from 7.7% in October.

NTPC to sell green energy biz stake

New Delhi: India's largest power producer NTPC Ltd aims to sell a 20% stake in its green energy business this fiscal year, expecting to raise up to ₹30 billion (\$363.97 million), three government sources said. The deal marks the first green transaction by an Indian state company, which has drawn interest from investors, such as Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Malaysia's Petronas and Brookfield. The decision to sell 20% to strategic investors will be followed by an initial public offering of NTPC Green Energy Ltd next financial year.

EU fails again on gas price cap

Brussels: European Union energy ministers failed yet again to overcome their deep differences Tuesday on a natural gas price cap that many hope would make utility bills cheaper so people can stay a little warmer during harsh winter days - if not this year, then later. The ministers could not come to agreement on a maximum ceiling to pay for gas due to fear that global suppliers will simply bypass Europe when others offer more money.



“The BSNL went through a very bad phase. Primarily due to certain political parties during UPA time. Lots of funds were diverted away”

ASHWINI VAISHNAW
| COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER

INFOSYS COMPLETES 4 DECADES

As IT major Infosys commemorated its four decades of existence, its founders reminisced about the company's journey Wednesday. NR Narayana Murthy, Nandan M Nilekani, S Gopalakrishnan, SD Shibulal and K Dinesh took a trip down memory lane at its campus



Nov WPI inflation at 5.85%

THE WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX BASED INFLATION HAS BEEN ON A DECLINING TREND SINCE MAY AND CAME DOWN TO SINGLE DIGIT IN OCTOBER AT 8.39%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: The wholesale price-based inflation fell to a 21-month low of 5.85 per cent in November as prices of food, fuel and manufactured items softened.

Experts said a high base of last year and some easing in food prices also worked in favour of the November 2022 wholesale price index (WPI) coming in at its lowest level since February 2021 when it was 4.83 per cent.

"Decline in the rate of inflation in November 2022 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of food articles, basic metals, textiles, chemicals & chemical products and paper & paper products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the commerce and industry ministry said Wednesday.

Inflation in food articles in November was 1.07 per cent against 8.33 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in vegetables was (-)20.08 per cent during the month compared to 17.61 per cent in October.

Bank of Baroda in a research note said WPI inflation continued to moderate in November with the base effect working in favour of lower numbers.

Within food, prices of fruits, vegetables, especially tomato and potato, dragged down the prices. However, there is an uptick in prices of wheat, pulses and milk products.

"With Russian federation re-joining the Black Sea Grain initiative,



INFLATION IN FOOD ARTICLES IN NOVEMBER WAS 1.07% AGAINST 8.33% IN THE PREVIOUS MONTH

INFLATION IN VEGETABLES WAS (-)20.08% DURING THE MONTH COMPARED TO 17.61% IN OCTOBER

IN THE 'FUEL AND POWER' BASKET, INFLATION WAS 17.35%, WHILE IN MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, IT WAS 3.59%

wheat prices are expected to see some volatility in the coming months. Core WPI softened to two-year low of 3.5 per cent in November. Going ahead, we expect further easing in WPI inflation," Bank of Baroda said in a note.

As per WPI data, in the 'fuel and power' basket, inflation was 17.35 per cent, while in manufactured products, it was 3.59 per cent in November.

The Reserve Bank takes into account retail inflation for formulating monetary policy. Data released earlier this week showed retail inflation dipped below the

RBI's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent for the first time in 11 months in November on softening food price index.

Though the consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation declined to 5.88 per cent in November, experts still expect the RBI to hike interest rates by another 25 basis points in its February monetary policy review.

The Reserve Bank had last week said the worst of inflation is behind us, but there is no room for complacency and hiked the benchmark policy rate by 35 basis points to 6.25 per cent.

ADB sticks to India's GDP growth at 7%

ADB dims growth forecasts for Asia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: Asian Development Bank (ADB) has kept its outlook for India's economic growth unchanged at 7 per cent for the current fiscal year while forecasting a weaker-than-previously expected pace for developing Asia.

ADB's 7 per cent growth projection for fiscal 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023), unchanged from its September forecast, compares to 8.7 per cent GDP growth in 2021-22. For 2023-24, the GDP growth has been kept unchanged at 7.2 per cent.

The Manila-based ADB in a report Wednesday saw Asia expanding 4.2 per cent this year before accelerating to 4.6 per cent in 2023. These projections compare to the previously estimated expansion of 4.3 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively.

"Despite recent global headwinds, the Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.0 per cent, as projected in the Update, supported by a strong domestic base. While some recent high-frequency indicators are more favourable than expected - notably consumer confidence, electricity supply and purchasing managers' indexes - others are a little less favourable, in particular exports, largely textiles and iron ore, and the index of industrial production of consumer goods," it said.

The growth forecast for 2023-34 is unchanged at 7.2 per cent, "sustained by positive effects from structural reform and from public investment



Asia and the Pacific will continue to recover, but worsening global conditions mean that the region is losing steam as we head into the new year

ALBERT PARK | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ADB

catalysing private investment". Inflation in India is still expected to rise to 6.7 per cent in 2022-23 before falling back to 5.8 per cent.

On the supply side, the increase was led by service sector growth at 9.3 per cent, contributing 4.6 percentage points to GDP growth. Industry, by contrast, suffered a small contraction by 0.8 per cent, dragged down by contraction in manufacturing and mining, ADB added.

The Asian Development Bank has cut its economic growth forecasts for next year, expecting a trio of headwinds in the form of China's continued fight against Covid, fallout from the Ukraine war and slowing global growth to keep hindering the region's recovery.

Citing the darkening global economic prospects, the Manila-based multilateral bank cut its 2023 forecast for developing Asia to 4.6% from the 4.9% it projected in September. It also trimmed its 2022 view for the area, which comprises 46 of its members, including China, South Korea and India, to 4.2% from 4.3%.

BIZ BUZZ

IMFA bags FICCI CSR Award

Bhubaneswar: IMFA received Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) award in recognition of the commendable work done as a socially responsible company for their contribution under 'Sakshyam'. Bansidhar & Ila Panda Foundation, the CSR arm of IMFA is responsible for implementation of all CSR projects including 'Sakshyam' comprising several livelihood and skill development projects 'Unnati' and 'Yuva Sakshyam' for rural women and youth respectively, for which the award of appreciation is received. Ashok Behera, Vice President, BIPF received the award from Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, at the FICCI CSR Summit in New Delhi.



Govt to sell up to 5% stake in IRCTC today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 14: The government will Thursday sell up to 5 per cent stake in IRCTC through an offer for sale (OFS) at a floor price of ₹680 a share.

The OFS includes base issue size of 2 crore shares or 2.5 per cent stake, with an option to retain over-subscription of another 2.5 per cent, taking the total issue size to 4 crore shares or 5 per cent stake.

At the floor price of ₹680 a share, sale of 4 crore shares in Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) would fetch about ₹2,700 crore to the exchequer.

The floor price is at a discount of 7.4 per cent over Wednesday's closing price of IRCTC on the BSE. Shares of IRCTC closed at ₹734.70, up 1.53 per cent over previous close on BSE. The OFS will open for subscription by institutional investors Thursday and Friday for retail investors.

The proceeds from IRCTC OFS will add to the disinvestment kitty of the government. The government has raised ₹28,383 crore from central public sector enterprises' stake sale so far this fiscal against the full year budget target of ₹65,000 crore.

GLOBAL HEADWINDS

CAD may swell to 37-qtr high of 4.4% of GDP in Q2

IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS FISCAL THE DEFICIT WAS \$23.9BN OR 2.8%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 14: Falling exports and high crude prices are set to push up current account deficit (CAD) in the second quarter to a 37-quarter high of 4.4 per cent of GDP at \$36 billion as against \$9.7 billion or 1.3 per cent in the year-ago period, estimates a report.

As a percentage of GDP, the previous high was in the first quarter of 2013-14 when CAD had scaled to 4.7 per cent, but in absolute terms the previous high was in the third quarter of 2012-13 when it touched \$31.8 billion.

Global headwinds facing merchandise exports had the shipments contracting by close to 20 per cent in October 2022, first time since February 2021 and the agency expects merchandise exports to slip to an eight-quarter low of \$88.2 billion in Q3FY23 which would be 17.4 per cent lower than Q3FY22, according to an assessment by India Ratings.

On the other side, falling com-



modity prices will help the country lower its import bill in the third quarter (Q3), even though crude prices were still 19.9 per cent in October-November. And the agency expects merchandise imports to decelerate to a three-quarter low of \$171.9 billion in Q3, but will still be up 2.9 per cent on-year.

Overall, merchandise trade deficit will rise to a fresh high of \$83.7 billion in Q3, which is 38.9 per cent higher than Q3FY22, ac-

ording to its estimate.

The agency expects the rupee to average 81.8 against the USD, up 9.1 per cent in Q3, further putting pressure on CAD.

As against this merchandise exports stood at a three-quarter low of \$112.5 billion in Q2FY23, up from \$121.1 billion in Q1 due to the impact of global headwinds such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, global growth slowdown and elevated inflation.

Optimism returning to bond markets after rout in 2022

Aggressive tightening to contain inflation, exacerbated by war in Ukraine, triggered a paradigm shift for bonds, ending more than a decade of tame inflation and record-low borrowing costs

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 14: Many of the world's big bond fund managers, from BlackRock to Vanguard, are optimistic that sovereign debt markets have turned a corner after a rout in 2022 with peak inflation and interest rates finally in sight.

Prices of US 30-year Treasuries have gained over 10% in the past month, while UK-based fixed income funds saw inflows of 1.09 billion pounds (\$1.33 billion) in November, the highest in two years, according to fund network Calastone.

After a year that has seen the worst ever bond market returns after its No 1 enemy - inflation - soared, optimism is returning. Signs that inflation pressures are abating means central banks can

let up on aggressive rate rises. An anticipated half-point Federal Reserve rate hike Wednesday will take its policy rate to 4.25%-4.50%, from near zero in March, the swiftest rise since Fed Chair Paul Volcker battled an even worse inflation flare-up over four decades ago.

BlackRock, which manages \$8 trillion worth of assets, sees short-term government bonds as attractive; Europe's largest fund manager, Amundi, says "bonds are back" in 2023.

OPPORTUNITY
As bond yields stabilise at higher levels, many investors have increased their exposure.

Jeffrey Sherman, Deputy CIO at DoubleLine, which manages almost \$100 billion in assets, said his portfolio combines exposure to high-quality credit and Treasuries.



It's too early to call the end of potential pressure on interest rates but the extreme volatility is over and ... the bludgeoning of the financial system by the Fed is over

RICK RIEDER | CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER, BLACKROCK

Vanguard's CIO Greg Davis said the "bright spot" was that investors

were being compensated for holding bonds now. "We're in an environment where you've gotten yields back to something that's more normalized versus artificially depressed," he said.

Others favoured corporate bonds, especially investment-grade firms with short-dated debt yields now over 5%, deeming them safer to invest in compared with earlier this year as a recession looms.

TIPPING POINT

Deutsche Bank calls 2022 the first global bond bear market in 70 years

As bond prices slid, US, German and British 10-year bond yields jumped roughly 200 basis points each in the biggest annual surge since 1994, putting debt markets under strain

In Europe, negative rates, where investors effectively pay an issuer if they hold their debt to maturity, became history. A year ago 6 trillion euros worth of euro area debt, or 67% of the market, had sub-zero yields

Japan, which stuck with an ultra-loose policy, remains the only major bond market with negative yields

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY

But with bonds failing to provide safety in 2022, caution remains. Hefty debt supply such as central banks wind down trillions of dol-

lars in bonds held on their balance sheets, means headwinds remain.

Estimates for European bond sales after accounting for central bank purchases in 2023 are as high as over 500 billion euros.

"Depending on the scenario you're looking at this could mean a doubling of the amount that private investors will need to absorb compared to previous years," said Union Investment chief economist Joerg Zeuner.

Investors have also shown a readiness to punish governments they perceive as fiscally imprudent as a recent rout in British bonds showed.

Hedge fund managers attending a recent private UBS conference, said now was not the time to buy long-dated debt, according to a conference video seen by Reuters.

Finally, watch inflation, which caught many by surprise and could prove sticky, fund managers said. "There are positive signs (on inflation), but I don't think there's any time for complacency," said Jim Leaviss, CIO Public Fixed Income at M&G Investments.

MESSI, ALVAREZ SINK CROATIA

Modric shares WC stage with Leo

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lusail, Dec 14: Luka Modric pulled his shirt up over his face as he trudged over to the sideline. Croatia's red-and-white-clad fans recognized the sorrowful significance of the moment and rose up to applaud the diminutive midfielder who is probably their na-

reers, the contrast is stark. That was particularly evident leading up to and during the World Cup.

While Ronaldo hogged the limelight with his explosive eve-of-the-tournament interview with Piers Morgan, Modric expressed himself on the field.

After leading Croatia to the final in Russia, he was again the inspiration as a nation with a population of about 4 million made it to semi-finals for the second straight World Cup.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo, amid the distraction of his exit from Manchester United and possible transfer to a club in Saudi Arabia, ended up benched and in tears as Portugal's hopes were ended by Morocco in the quarterfinals.

In Croatia's quarterfinal match, Modric played his part in eliminating Brazil — and Neymar. But he couldn't do anything to stop Lionel Messi on his personal mission to finally win football's biggest trophy. Messi scored the opening goal from the penalty spot Tuesday, and then produced a piece of magic to set up the second of Julian Alvarez's two goals.

But Messi wasn't the only iconic figure on display at Lusail Stadium. Surely regarded by many as Croatia's finest, Modric also ranks alongside the best midfielders to ever play the game. A five-time Champions League winner with Real Madrid, he also won soccer's ultimate individual prize, the Ballon d'Or, in 2018.

And his performances in Qatar show he still has more to give. Wherever Modric's story goes from here, his status as a World Cup great is secure.

tion's great-
ever player.

Argentina's boisterous supporters soon followed suit at Lusail Stadium, honoring an opponent who is likely appearing at his last World Cup.

Substituted in the 81st minute Tuesday, with his team trailing by three goals, it effectively marked the end of Modric's World Cup era. Croatia ended up losing to Argentina 0-3 in the semifinals, four years after the team lost to France in the final.

Modric was somber as he was replaced by Lovro Majer before calmly taking his seat in the dugout. There was no grand gesture to the crowd or outpouring of emotion for a man whose understated brilliance can still be overlooked despite everything he has achieved.

The second most famous 37-year-old at the World Cup is going home, a few days after the other one. Modric is the same age as former Real Madrid teammate Cristiano Ronaldo, but as both men approach the twilight of their trophy-laden ca-



Luka Modric looks dejected as he, alongside his teammates, applauds the support from the Croatian fans after their loss, Tuesday



Luka Modric looks dejected as he, alongside his teammates, applauds the support from the Croatian fans after their loss, Tuesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lusail (Qatar), Dec 14: Lionel Messi is back in the World Cup final with Argentina on his mission to win football's biggest prize for the first time. And, at 35, he could hardly be playing any better.

Messi converted a penalty and had a hand in the other two goals by Julian Alvarez, leading Argentina to a 3-0 win over Croatia on Tuesday that set up a meeting with either France or Morocco in Sunday's title match.

It will be Messi's second World Cup final — Argentina lost the other one to Germany in 2014 — in what might be his last appearance at the tournament. It could yet be the perfect way to go out for a player widely regarded as one of the game's best players, if not the best.

Messi is thrilling his legion of fans along the way, with his swivel and driving run to set up the third goal for Alvarez in the 69th minute epitomizing his confidence and swagger. He is embracing the responsibility of leading Argentina to its third World Cup title, scoring in five of his six games in Qatar. He even had a penalty saved in the game in which he didn't score.

Croatia failed in their bid to reach a second straight World Cup final after conceding two goals in a five-minute span from the 34th, just when the team was looking comfortable at Lusail Stadium.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni was in tears after the final whistle, even though the celebrations in

general were much calmer than after previous games. Messi was in the middle of them all as he continues perhaps his best ever World Cup.

Yet there was a moment midway through the first half that must have struck fear into all Argentines, when Messi appeared clutch his left hamstring and rub it. Was Argentina's superstar going to have to come off? No such luck for Croatia.

Messi was soon toying with his opponents in a way only he can and put Argentina ahead by lifting his penalty into the top corner after Alvarez was taken out by Dominik Livakovic after clipping the ball past Croatia's goalkeeper.

Alvarez poked home his first goal at the end of a surging run from halfway, starting with Messi's short pass. He put in the third following more outrageous skill from his teammate near the right corner that left Josko Gvardiol — one of the best defenders at the World Cup — grasping at thin air.

It was one game too far for Croatia, which had beaten Japan and Brazil on penalties in the knockout stage, and star midfielder Luka Modric, who — at 37 — has likely played his final World Cup match.

Summing up a frustrating game for the little midfield magician, he was substituted in the 81st minute and had a bright red nose after the ball slammed in his face moments earlier.

Argentina maintained their record of never having lost in the

World Cup semifinals and have reached the final for the sixth time.

Those dark days after losing to Saudi Arabia in their opening group match seem so long ago now for Argentina, who will be hard to stop in the final with Messi playing this well.

The 22-year-old Alvarez didn't start the tournament as Argentina's striker. He only took the place of Lautaro Martinez in the third group game and now has four goals, one behind Messi and Kylian Mbappe. He is the youngest player to score twice in a World Cup semifinal match since a 17-year-old Pele scored a hat-trick in 1958.

Messi became Argentina's record scorer at World Cups with his third penalty of the tournament taking him to 11 goals in total — one more than Gabriel Batistuta

He also tied the record for most appearances at the World Cup by playing for the 25th time, the same number as Lothar Matthaus of Germany

Pujara, Iyer prop India to 278/6



CRUCIAL STAND: Shreyas Iyer (L) and Cheteshwar Pujara run between the wickets during their partnership on the opening day of the first Test against Bangladesh, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chattogram, Dec 14: Cheteshwar Pujara injected a fresh lease of life into his uncertain international future with a dogged 90 (203b, 11x4) while Shreyas Iyer enjoyed a reprieve to remain unbeaten on 82 (169b, 10x4) in India's underwhelming opening day score of 278/6 against Bangladesh in the first Test.

Pujara missed out on a Test hundred as he was bowled neck and crop by a beauty from left-arm spinner Taijul Islam (3/84) but not before seeing India out of danger with a 149-run fifth-wicket stand with Iyer.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz (2/71) dismissed Axar Patel (14) off the last delivery of the day to wrest the initiative back for the hosts who would like to restrict India around

Pujara in the final half hour to negate the advantage that India had gained after the fall of three wickets.

Iyer, for one, was lucky when he was beaten through the gate by Ebadot Hossain and the ball hit the stumps with the bail being disturbed from its groove but didn't fall.

It was Pant who showed the much-needed aggression as he along with Pujara added 64 runs after India were reduced to 48/3 in the 20th over.

India expectedly opted to bat but squandered the opportunity by allowing the Bangladesh bowlers to dominate the proceedings. The aggressive approach that Rahul spoke about ahead of the game was missing in the first session.

Spin was introduced as early as in the sixth over. Bangladesh bowlers stuck to stump-to-stump line and stifled the Indians. Gill perished to a poor shot, an avoidable sweep, while Rahul played away from his body off pacer Khaled Ahmed only to drag it back on to the stumps.

The top-order batters could have used their feet more against the spinners but preferred to stay back in the crease. The much-needed attacking approach was displayed once again by Pant.

Pujara should have been dismissed very early in the second session but Nurul Hasan couldn't hold on to the rare opportunity in the 27th over off Hossain.

Pant continued to look for quick runs and hammered Miraz and Hossain for two more boundaries. The keeper-batter also clobbered Miraz over deep midwicket for a maximum but the spinner had the last laugh as he cleaned him up next ball in the 32nd over.

BRIEF SCORES
India 278/6 (Cheteshwar Pujara 90, Shreyas Iyer 82 batting; Taijul Islam 3/84, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 2/71) vs Bangladesh. Match to continue.

Eves' batting collapse leads to 21-run loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 14: Indian batting collapsed like a pack of cards under pressure as Australian women showed clinical precision to record a comfortable 21-run victory in the third T20I here Wednesday. Australia now lead five-match series 2-1.

Chasing a target of 173, India were in cruise control mode at 106/2, riding on some cavalier hitting from Shafali Verma (52, 41b, 6x4, 3x6) and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (37, 27b, 6x4). The duo had added 73 in just 8.4 overs and 67 off 40 odd balls

Virat moves to 8th, Ishan to 37 in ODI rankings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 14: Star India batter Virat Kohli has moved up two rungs to the eighth position, while young opener Ishan Kishan rocketed 117 spots to 37th place in the latest ICC ODI rankings released Wednesday. Kohli has been rewarded for scoring his first ODI hundred in more than three years in a match against Bangladesh recently while Kishan made huge gains following his fastest ODI double century in the same match.

The former India captain had scored a 91-ball 113 in the third and final ODI against Bangladesh in Chattogram Saturday. Left-handed opener Kishan, on the other hand, had slammed a record-breaking 210 off 131 balls.

Shreyas Iyer too advanced from 20th to 15th in the batting chart following his score of 82 in the second match of the series in Dhaka.

Among bowlers, Indian pacer Mohammad Siraj gained four places to 22nd in the ODI ranking, while Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib al Hasan was up one place to eighth. Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz has moved up three places to third.

looked eminently gettable.

But, once Shafali was holed out at mid-wicket boundary; there was a slump as India lost four wickets for the addition of 17 runs in less than three overs as the match turned decisively in favour of Southern Stars. India were finally restricted to 151/7 in 20 overs.

Richa Ghosh (1) and Harmanpreet, the two other big-hitters apart from Shafali, were also dismissed while going for big hits and almost all the Australian bowlers reduced the pace on their deliveries to make it difficult for strokeplay.

Darcie Brown (2/19), Meghan Schutt (1/23), spinner Ashleigh Gardner (2/21) were exceptional on the day. Deepti Sharma (25 n o, 17b, 3x4), not exactly known for her power-hitting, would have never been able to consistently hit those big shots as it became a comfortable win for Alyssa Healy's women.

Earlier, Australia recovered from early jolts and rode on flamboyant Ellyse Perry's 75 (47b, 9x4, 3x6) to post 172/8 after batting first. Invited to bat, Australia made a disastrous start as captain Healy and Tahlia McGrath got

out in the first and second overs respectively.

Renuka Thakur (2/24) had opener Healy LBW for just 1 while Anjali Sarvani (2/34) got rid of one-down McGrath, also for one, as Australia were 5/2 in the second over.

But Perry and then Grace Harris (41, 18b, 4x4, 3x6) played pivotal roles to take Australia to a competitive total. From 79/3 at halfway stage, Australia added 93 runs in the back-end. For India, Renuka, Anjali, Deepti (2/40) and Devika Vaidya (2/22) took two wickets apiece.

Debabrata, Subham prop Odisha



DEBABRATA PRADHAN



SUBHAM NAYAK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 14: Debabrata Pradhan (89, 147b, 6x4, 4x6) and Subham Nayak (82, 138b, 12x4) helped Odisha post 457 in their first innings of the Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match against Baroda at the Vikas Cricket Ground here, Wednesday.

In response, Baroda were 77 for no loss at stumps on the second day with both the openers — Jyotsnil Singh (43 batting, 79b, 5x4, 1x6) and Pratyush Kumar (31 batting, 72b, 4x4) — didn't allow Odisha

bowlers to have a laugh in their 25 overs of play. Baroda were 380 runs behind Odisha total when stumps were drawn.

Earlier, Debabrata and Subham joined hands for a 161-run partnership for the ninth wicket, at a time when the hosts were reeling at 285/8. It was after a 101-run sixth wicket stand between Abhishek Raut (70, 80b, 10x4, 2x6) and Rajesh Dhuper (39, 102b, 4x4, 1x6).

Abhishek and Rajesh resumed the Odisha innings from an overnight total of 214/5. Both the batters played attacking cricket, especially

Abhishek as they guided Odisha past 280-run mark. However, the hosts lost three wickets in four runs to give the visitors the upper hand.

Bhargav Bhatt (3/116) broke the stand dismissing Abhishek, before Ninad Rathva (5/106) gave Odisha a double blow in successive deliveries — first Rajesh and then Suryakant Pradhan. Baroda had the momentum to bundle the hosts out, but they failed to do so.

Debabrata and Subham dealt with the Baroda bowling attack carefully and continued to frustrate the visitors. Their partnership turned out to be very crucial as they took the hosts close to 450.

It was Bhatt, who yet again broke the dangerous-looking partnership breaching the defence of Debabrata. A few over later, Rathva wrapped up the Odisha essay trapping Subham in front. With Subham's wicket, Rathva also completed his five-wicket haul.

BRIEF SCORES
Odisha 457 (Debabrata Pradhan 89, Subham Nayak 82, Abhishek Raut 70, Rajesh Dhuper 39; Ninad Rathva 5/106, Bhargav Bhatt 3/116); **Baroda 77/0** (Jyotsnil Singh 43 batting, Pratyush Kumar 31 batting). Match to continue.